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Herbert Luthy

The Passing of the European Order

Colonialism and the Cargo Cult

IT IS virtually impossible at the present moment, to have a dispassionate discussion about anything connected with European colonisation, or "colonialism." What remains of the European world dominion is on trial before the world's conscience—or, at any rate, before those who claim to speak as the world's conscience—and everyone comes to the subject with ready-made convictions: most of the participants do not even trouble to consult the atlas. Their arguments still draw on the seemingly inexhaustible treasury of philosophical propositions about the justice and injustice, the blessings and the crimes, of colonisation—propositions accumulated in a debate that has gone on in Europe ever since there have been European world empires; and the theses advanced by the "realists" and the "idealists" are at bottom the same as those of three hundred or four hundred years ago. Even the plaintiffs from Asia and Africa have found little to add to what was said, better and more pungently, by the Abbé Raynal and the men of the Enlightenment. And if the defenders of the last European colonial powers grow indignant—often enough with reason—about the shallow and uninformed moralists who would read them sermons on human and natural rights, and if they simply answer the accusations with counter-accusations ("Soviet colonialism," "oriental slavetraders," "Arab imperialism," "dollar imperialism"), then all that is left in the end is the disreputable proposal to reach a friendly agreement: why do we pluck out each other's eyes, we are all vultures? That leaves as the only difference the one that cannot be eliminated, the great disparity of vitality, voracity, and self-confidence among the vultures; and here no arguments help.

The debate is undeniably serious; and its gravity cannot be measured by the eloquence of the speeches on either side. Both are dealing exclusively with present-day circumstances and attitudes, whereas the word "colonialism" was coined precisely not only to denote a state of affairs that is past but also to obscure what is essential in this past: the historical process of colonisation, which has not merely left behind some political connections that are today shaky or insecure, but shaped the world in which we are living. To grasp the issue we have to start, not from the relics of "colonialism," but from the process of colonisation.

THE European world order which is now breaking up was from the first inherently contradictory. The superiority of organisation and of techniques which developed on that small continent was its premise and its starting point. The appropriation of these techniques and modes of

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organisation by non-European peoples is its unavoidable consequence and probable end. This was not necessarily its intention; though wherever colonial policy, looking beyond the mere exercise of power, sought an inner justification, it did conceive of colonisation as an educative process moving towards its own goal, emancipation. In any case, education was always, willy-nilly, a part of colonisation; but emancipation came as the result, not of a graduation certificate, but of rebellion, force, and hatred. Now—very late, and after a long period of bad conscience and reluctant retreat—this rebellion is met by a European resentment which is akin to the feelings of disappointed parents: we brought you our civilisation, and this is the thanks we get for it.

The discussion of colonial problems in the European press bears a staggeringly naïve resemblance to discussions about child-rearing, with their unending controversy between the adherents of strict authority and the advocates of free development. Even the Franco-British Suez expedition was only too reminiscent of a delayed—too long delayed—attempt by desperate parents to re-establish their lost authority by resorting once more to the stick. The same psychology of conflict between the generations is at work on the other side too, in the attitude of peoples who once stood under European tutelage, or rather of their political élites, who are in truth the product of European schools. Their demands are those of the adolescent: to be respected and treated as adults, and to be protected as minors. The West has the "obvious" duty—the duty of parents—to help set the newly emancipated countries on their feet and to help them on; it owes them its machines, its technical and financial aid, its steel works and its power dams, and this without thanks or return. But it must resist the temptation to give advice or read lectures; it just does not understand the modern world any longer; "now it is our turn." When this century was still in its swaddling clothes, the pedagogues announced that it would be the century of the child; their prophecy has been fulfilled in many and unexpected ways.

The Cargo Cult

THE so-called Cargo Cult is a peculiar religious movement which spread after the Second World War among a remote group of the Admiralty Islands of the Pacific. With its elements of religious awakening and its expectation of a Second Coming, the movement is more complex and problematical than can be suggested in a few lines, but its basic outline is simple. Technical mass civilisation reached these primitive people in the shape of an American military outpost that scattered its extravagant supplies of consumer goods among the poor and primitive Manus, things never before seen, and obviously not the work of human hands but gifts from the good spirits inhabiting the beyond. In this new golden age the old strict kinship order, based on poverty and the fear of demons, collapsed, and the ships' cargoes became the object of a new religious cult. But when at the end of the war the Americans departed and their transports ceased, prophets arose who proclaimed that the cargoes destined for them from the beyond no longer arrived because the greedy whites were now intercepting them.

Often it seems that the entire non-European world has been seized by the Cargo Cult. The wealth and living standards of the West are not the work of human hands, not created by labour, but a right which we have arrogantly denied to non-European nations; and now they are claiming this right. The West owes it to them, and if the West does not carry out its parental obligations or tries to deduce from them a right of tutelage, it is threatened with the most radical form of rupture of all links, Communism.

Fortunately the comparison is distorted, but it opens our eyes to a contradiction that is otherwise easily overlooked. For what is the Cargo Cult but a cult of Western civilisation, and what, seen from Asia or Africa, is Communism if not the most violent method of appropriating this civilisation? Never has the Europeanisation of the world advanced more rapidly than in the last ten years. Nowhere has the attack on European rule been

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conducted in the name of a different civilisation. Nowhere are the colonisers of yesterday seriously reproached for having torn the non-European peoples out of their pre-colonial life—India out of the pomp and poverty of the Mogul Empire, China out of the rigidity of the Central Kingdom, Africa out of the dominion of tribal fetishes and magic rites. The real reproach echoing round the world is the one which the Pacific islanders voice so naïvely: that Europe has selfishly kept from the non-European peoples the means of becoming Europeans too. It is a rebellion of impatience, aimed not at being something different but at becoming the same.

But is it really Europeanisation or at best a caricature of Europe, the appropriation of its external and material forms without the contents and values of the West? European society is the end product of a long and tortuous process which, even if we do not trace it back to Greece or Rome, represents the organic development of many centuries, evolving out of the municipal liberties of the middle ages, the intellectual crises of Renaissance and Reformation, the secularisation of state and law, the separation of metaphysics from physics in the age of enlightenment and rationalism, the parallel growth of capital, of the craftsman's skill, and of scientific and technical knowledge, all meeting in the industrial revolution—to mention only a few of the chief elements that have been at work. Should we really be surprised that other peoples and continents have neither the time nor the patience to follow the centuries-long road that led from the barbarian world of the great migrations to 20th-century society, and propose instead to follow the shorter route offered by America or Russia? America, Europe's giant offspring nourished on colonial soil, whose technical enthusiasm is inhibited neither by the traditional weights of an aristocratic or monarchical society nor by a care for inherited social forms; Russia, the first under-developed country in which a radical and Westernised intelligentsia initiated the experiment of bypassing a century of development and replacing all-too-slow organic growth by terror, forced labour, and the conformity of the drill hall. It is precisely this in Communism that attracts Asia—that it is prepared ruthlessly to sacrifice the present and even the following generation to build by force the apparatus of industrial and military power. The élite of the newly emancipated countries, an almost transparently thin upper crust, has not much time to exploit their prestige as national liberators among the inarticulate masses.

Never and nowhere in the emancipation of colonial countries have forces advocating the return to pre-colonial conditions had their way. Everywhere victory has gone to an intelligentsia itself trained by colonisation, who now want to carry through to the end, and by their own efforts, the work begun by the colonisers.

Not by Force Alone

THE content of colonisation is not the history of colonial empires, the political domination of foreign countries. It is, and was from the beginning of history, the tremendous process by which the world was discovered, made accessible, and settled, by which roads and sea-lanes were opened and made safe, by which closed kingdoms and stagnant societies were forced open or broken up by new techniques, new customs, new knowledge, and new forms of social organisation. It might be said that the history of colonisation is the history of civilisations themselves, which have grown not in the isolation of a local culture but only in confrontation and collision with other cultures. There have been great empires which have been content with plunder and tribute, and they left on the history of civilisation but the faint trace of a ruin; there have been ages of magnificent colonisation which barely displayed the beginnings of an expansion of political power—the classic example is the hellenisation of the Mediterranean world. It is a process of which the forces that set it in motion remain for the most part mysterious. At one spot on the inhabited earth a yeast came into being which raised the heavy

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dough of mankind and set it in movement. And then the movement died away, because the yeast was stifled by the monstrous mass, or because the salt lost its savour—most often, no doubt, because of both.

The tremendous outburst of colonising activity that spread from Europe since the end of the Middle Ages, the voyages of discovery, the search for spoils, the expansion of trade, the religious missions, the emigration, and the conquests embraced for the first time the whole world and set the whole of mankind in movement. The dynamic of that movement works on, even after the impulse from Europe has been stilled. If ever a chapter in history merited the title of World Revolution, it is this gigantic adventure which, in a bare half millenium, changed the face of the world unrecognisably, tore entire continents from their isolation, and for the first time made it possible to think of mankind as a single whole, and history as universal history. Even if today, like the sorcerer's apprentice, Europe would often wish the broom back in its corner, still this world revolution has been achieved, and we are now all entangled in this universal history.

Nor is it true that this history is simply a history of violence; processes of *this* magnitude are never the work of force alone. However bloody and cruel some episodes in the history of colonisation may be, by and large the part of force in this world revolution is astonishingly small; it was with ludicrously few material means that Europe transformed the world. The empire of the Incas fell in dust before the attack of a handful of Spanish adventurers who, on an utterly alien continent, scarcely knew where they were or what lay ahead. The four hundred millions of India were held together to the end by no more than 800 British police and 60,000 troops. From the beginning to the end of the history of colonisation, we encounter this grotesque disproportion between the material means of power and the effects produced. This passive capacity of the non-European world to be colonised was as basic a factor in European world power as the European drive for expansion itself. Virtually nowhere did the colonisers come up against political entities and social structures possessing an innate capacity to resist, against peoples who lived in the consciousness of a freedom or independence worth defending, or who cared much if their rulers changed. The European nations have waged great and murderous wars against each other; it was against each other that they fought for world power, not against the colonial peoples; only surplus energies were siphoned off into colonisation. Colonisation was not primarily the work of a few governments and states, but of hundreds of thousands of colonists, pioneers, and adventurers, the élite or the outcasts of *all* European nations. This outburst of surplus energy was the real moving force before which the primitive, decaying, or stagnant societies of the non-European world cracked or collapsed.

Political re-organisation, the taking over by individual European powers of the administration of—and therewith responsibility for—the fate of these countries followed as an expression of the need to direct this world revolution along orderly paths, to control the boundless, irresponsible, freebooting and destructive enterprise of the pioneers and adventurers. Only then did constructive and regulating official colonisation replace pure mercantilism, which had flung open doors and beaten down barricades everywhere without regard to the consequences. If imperial India is the greatest example of constructive colonisation, the fate of China after 1850 is the most shattering example of what happens to a great country which was wrenched out of its isolation but was *not* colonised, whose old order disintegrated in contact with the West but for whom nobody assumed responsibility. It was colonial rule which created out of the European world revolution a European world order—the first world order, and up to now the only one.

Europe's self-destruction

THE European world order broke down at its centre, in Europe itself. Europe had organised the world, politically and

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economically, to its own (though not only its own) advantage, and for the non-European world the age of colonial empires was by and large an age of peace and security such as Asia and Africa had scarcely known before. It was only in itself that Europe failed to introduce order. Two European wars, driven to the limits of destruction, demolished the material, political, and moral foundations of the European world authority.

More potent than any single action which led to this breakdown was the terrifying European lack of imagination. For every schoolboy in this Europe that has created a world consciousness, a world civilisation, and a world history—for every statesman, for every man-in-the-street, national consciousness, national culture, and national history remained the final and absolute measure of thought and action. Europe itself failed to keep up with the European world revolution: the possibilities were lost in the irrational labyrinth of European sovereignties. We are forced once again to the comparison with ancient Greece, whose city states in a similar splendid outburst of energy hellenised the Mediterranean and the Near East and created a vast domain of economic interdependence and cultural penetration, but were unable to grow out of the cramping limitations of the city-state, regarding the *polis* as the final and highest communal form beyond which no self-determination, no cultural unity, and no cohesion seemed conceivable, and which in unending wars of rivalry exhausted and annihilated each other until the hellenic motherland of western civilisation sank into provincial insignificance in the midst of a hellenised world, to decline in the end into colonies of hellenised barbarian states. This was not a question of the loss of power exercised over others—Greece never established a Mediterranean empire—but of something far more decisive: intellectually and morally Greece lagged behind a development which she herself had set in motion and whose dimensions she was no longer able to grasp. The ancient Greeks refused to recognise their own work in hellenism; in Alexandria they saw a parody of Athens; they sought compensation for their impotence in offended pride; and this rejection of all that led beyond Hellas was the final step towards sterility.

This comparison implies no prediction; but many pseudo-problems on which the daily debate about colonialism feeds, become irrelevant in this perspective. *Europe's colonisation of the world was neither a chain of crimes nor a chain of beneficence, it was the birth of the modern world itself*; not one of the former colonial peoples remembers it with gratitude, for it was an alien rule, but none wishes to turn back the clock, and that is colonialism's historical justification.

THE other question, to-day's question, whether Western Europe, divided or united, still has, or again will have the power to maintain its overseas positions, against the will of the local population or the local rulers, can be answered with brutal brevity, and it is better to do so without moral or legal embellishments. No European state, and probably no coalition of European states, can on its own conduct a world power policy any longer. It is true that power itself is more than a matter of the material means of power; other factors such as prestige and self-confidence come into play, incapable of precise measurement—but it is these even more than the material means that Europe has lost. The question admits of a crude and summary answer. No West European state, nor West Europe as a whole, is able to act independently as a world power, because it is not by itself in a position to withstand attack—nor even the blackmailing threat of attack—from that great power which already holds half of Europe under its yoke.

There are a number of circumlocutions for the avoidance of this bald statement, but it remains a fact that Western Europe is independent thanks to an American guarantee, and without that guarantee might succumb even without military hostilities. It is true that this protectorate is not defined in any statute, and the balance of world forces is delicate enough to offer some room for manoeuvre and even for indulgence in great-

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power illusions. France and Britain, thanks to American protection, can denude the European continent almost entirely of troops, and use them for their own purposes, and so dispose on loan of the means to maintain their old imperial positions; but only on loan—that is, only so long as their policy does not come into collision with American policy or, without American consent, challenge Russian policy. The Suez affair revealed this reality of today's power-relations with a vivid clarity.

America cannot be simply included among the Western or "Atlantic" powers, as we with our European perspective would like to believe. America is as much a Pacific as an Atlantic power turned towards Asia as well as towards Europe. It is the only power that is present in all continents and on all seas—a heavy responsibility for which it was not prepared either by tradition or by its political institutions. The world struggle, to which we give the dubious name of East-West conflict, had as its starting point the rivalry of the new world powers to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the European world order; it was only by degrees that the magnitude of the vacuum was realised. In this competition America must seek other partners and allies along with the retreating West European colonial powers; its policy *cannot* coincide with theirs—except for the single and decisive objective of preventing the world from relapsing into closed empires behind iron curtains and Chinese walls, of keeping open the possibility of a world order based on voluntary partnership, an order in which Europe can still survive.

British and French Colonial Policy

THIS is the background against which the two last European colonial powers have been fighting their great rearguard action for the last ten years. For a long time the majority of people in Britain and France followed this apparently irresistible retreat with indifference or resignation. Britain was proud of the voluntary transfer of power in India, and of the praise which this brought her. France greeted with relief, and even with enthusiasm, the government which ended the war in Indochina by complete surrender and thus evacuated the last French positions in Asia. The change came very late and very suddenly, at the point where the retreat reached Europe's immediate outworks, the Mediterranean: North Africa, the French province on the opposite shore; Suez, lifeline of the British Empire; the oilfields of the Persian Gulf, Europe's source of energy. Reinforcing these direct material interests, an impulse deriving from centuries of hostility broke through to the surface. Islam, which once as a religion of conquest swept over the Graeco-Roman-Christian world from Asia Minor across North Africa and into Spain, which for a thousand years barred the road between Europe and Asia, which created a desert around itself and turned the Mediterranean into a blind alley, was again on the march. In the Franco-British expeditionary force, particularly in the French that sailed from Algiers to Port Said, the spirit of the crusaders seemed to have re-awakened. This was not a question of claiming dominion over distant lands; this was the defence of the West itself, with its back to the wall. Something of the same crusader spirit was carried over into the watchwords of "European Unity," which suddenly became popular again in France. What was popular was not the timid and unexciting proposal for a common European market in fifteen years; it was the idea of a Eurafrican bloc, in which France's partners would make their own the cause of opening up and defending the African hinterland, for which France alone has not the strength.

Europe can find herself only in times of great danger, or in a great mission. And here is one, a project of immense magnitude. But today it lies under the dark shadow of the North African war. Until a way is found out of this last crisis of the French empire, "Europe," and "Eurafrica" even more, is a watchword burdened with ambiguities and reservations. Nothing would be more disastrous than to attach European unity, which has so far consistently missed every con-

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structive chance, to the worst of chances, a crusade into an impasse. "European market," "European free trade zone," "Eurafrica," are peculiar arrangements to negotiate at a time when the North African war is driving France deeper and deeper into economic and political isolation. None of the partners means the same thing, and when so many misunderstandings, silently overlooked, are embedded in the foundations, the building itself is likely to be insecure. In a trial which, in the French view, dominates and overshadows all other questions, France is seeking allies and discovers with bitterness that at best she has courteously aloof partners, who willingly take France at her word and see in this atrocious local war, as the official thesis puts it, nothing but "a purely internal French affair," and refuse to make France's cause their own. America urges the liquidation of the war; Europe is tactfully and sympathetically silent; Britain, which for a moment seemed to have gone over to France's side in the counter-offensive against "Arab imperialism," was a severe disappointment.

THIS too was a misunderstanding: the joint action of the two countries at Suez was a brief episode—in which there was not even a common Middle East policy—that soon yielded place to the old squabbles. Neither in their advance nor in their retreat have the two West European empires followed parallel paths; at Suez the two crossed, but did not merge. While France in crisis seeks European backing, Britain leans on America, and it is more likely that Europe will one day adhere to the Commonwealth and the Anglo-Saxon community than that England will withdraw to Europe. The completely different way in which the two countries react to defeats and emergencies derives from centuries-old differences of tradition and policy. They did not choose their different paths, but found them marked out, and along both the achievements have been tremendous; but one has now reached its end, while the other can still make for open country.

The British Empire arose as the empire of a sea power whose basic aim was to maintain the freedom of the seas: a strong network of bases at the hinges and the narrows, and loose control over large territories, with the sole object of preventing other powers from establishing themselves there. If the goal of colonisation is emancipation, England certainly did not pursue it consistently, selflessly, and eagerly; but neither did she do anything that worked in the opposite direction. As far as possible she let the colonies administer themselves, under supervision that was often scarcely perceptible; in India, a few governors and a few hundred police; in the oil principalities of the Persian Gulf a dozen agents with unimpressive titles, and behind them the financial power of London, the network of the imperial economy, and in emergencies the Navy. Countless problems which in the French empire appear insoluble never even arose for Britain. The structure of the Empire was always elastic enough to permit every form and degree of autonomy, up to complete independence.

Geographically, too, this Empire sought the open seas, the distant rather than the near, and steered clear of continental embarrassments. If the Suez Canal is the lifeline of the Empire, it became that against England's will. The open journey round the Cape is far better suited to the British tradition, and the British government did its utmost to prevent the construction of the Canal; only when France, without a penny from the City and in face of every kind of British diplomatic opposition, put the project through did the London government decide to bring these artificial straits too, and the adjacent area, under its control. That was the beginning of a Near East policy in whose mazes and contradictions Britain became ever more deeply entangled: the occupation of Egypt, Fashoda, Lawrence, the Arab League, the Palestine policy, the ejection of France from Syria, the dreams of Hashemite empire—a more and more complex house of cards whose entire Mediterranean façade has now collapsed. Without control of Cairo and the Sweet Water Canal,

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the Suez zone cannot be controlled; without Suez and Israel there is no access to Jordan; without Jordan there is no longer any reliable base between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. How far, in these straits, British policy has lost its customary flexibility, can be seen in Cyprus.

THERE is another difference: while France spent the years of the Second World War under the narcosis of German occupation, and entered the post-war world with pre-war ideas, England lived through the change step by step and, without the shock of collapse or the illusions of victory, drew the consequences. When Japan surrendered, France—like Holland—was simply not there in East Asia and hence was unable to intervene; its determination to make the desperate and hopeless attempt at reconquest was the more inflexible for that; whereas England was already engaged in voluntarily evacuating untenable positions and abandoning too heavy responsibilities.

To lean on America has become a principle of British statesmanship which cannot be shaken by local conflicts in China or the Mediterranean. Australia and New Zealand are affiliated, strategically, to America and not to England. Canada is outside the sterling bloc, inseparably linked, economically and financially, to the United States. The pound remains the medium for half the world's trade, and notwithstanding all the sterling crises England remains the banker of that half world, because nobody else shows the slightest desire to contest her position as banker of a group of insolvent and capital-hungry countries who are piling up deficits and overdrawing their accounts. Only the deposits of the colonies rich in raw materials continued to grow, but these are now one by one attaining independence—Malaya, Ghana, Nigeria—and therewith the right to dispose of their own property. England today is in the perilous position of a banker who is constantly taking up short term credits in order to finance long term advances and investments to his kinsfolk. But in doing so it is discharging an indispensable function within the free world. London has become the central bank for the underdeveloped countries; the domestic economy of the sterling area is more and more coming to operate according to a pattern in which dollar credits are pumped in from above, and flow out in sterling credits and development loans to the members and kinsfolk of the British Commonwealth. The symbiosis—political, military, and economic—that has developed between the United States and the British family of peoples is now organic; it is almost as though the American War of Independence were merely an historical error. If to this complex system of manifold partnerships and "special relations"—as the significantly vague English phrase goes—is added a West European free-trade zone, that does not imply Britain's adherence to the European Continent but the establishment of a new partnership which does not exclude those already existing.

The French colonial empire developed and was organised according to quite other laws. France followed a more difficult road. This was not an oceanic but a compact land empire from the Mediterranean to the Congo, the work of an army, not a navy, separated from the motherland only by the width of the Mediterranean. In origin and form French colonisation was military; in North Africa it broke through the strongest of Islam's barricades, which had remained for centuries impregnable. The army was not only the instrument of order, but also the melting-pot of this empire whose inhabitants were first French soldiers and then became French citizens. It is the empire of an administrative state shaped by absolutism whose centralised structure of command was untouched even by the Republic. According to the constitution, the one and indivisible Republic stretches from Flanders to the Congo, with *one* centre of administration and policy, *one* government, *one* parliament, and *one* single seat of indivisible sovereignty, Paris. Neither the emancipation nor even the autonomy of its parts was ever contemplated as the goal of development, but rather complete assimilation: from Flanders to the

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Congo a single nation of 85 million Frenchmen, white, brown, or black in colour, Christian, Moslem, or heathen in religion, but living under the same civil code and in the same civilisation; the goal was civilisation in the literal sense of the word—to make citizens, that is Frenchmen. This aim of fusing all races into *one* nation is the ideal, embodying both the absolutist tradition and the concepts of the French Revolution.

The Algerian Tragedy

It was a noble ideal, which has accomplished much, particularly in black Africa; it foundered tragically where French civilisation encountered a self-conscious autochthonous civilisation, and most disastrously where the indigenous mass was confronted with a compact body of Franco-European settlers who would have nothing to do with assimilation and in practice frustrated it. In North Africa, both factors were present: Islam setting limits to French civilisation and a powerful European minority which refused to enter the melting-pot together with the native population. There was no fusion. After 125 years of French colonisation scarcely one tenth of the Algerian children attend school; administration, law, welfare, and education have remained almost entirely in European hands; Algeria has become a country organised and administered in a thoroughly French fashion, but nine-tenths of its population remain on the outside, as homeless in their own country as in the Arab quarter of Paris or Saint-Etienne. The Algerian tragedy is the tragedy of a great ideal that for a long time won the naïve acceptance of the native élite—until it became nothing but a legal fiction.

Together with the ideal of assimilation, French colonisation lost the ideal which held the empire together from within; it became nothing more than the persistence of a state of affairs which was no longer even juridically definable, under a constitution solemnly promulgated and openly and unthinkingly violated for ten years. There are other and very material reasons for the crisis of the French colonial empire, which has for ten years dragged its way from one battlefield to another and swallowed up France's resources as well as the best of her rising generation. But at its heart stands the almost religious dogma of the one and indivisible sovereign nation which remained unassailable even when its cardinal implication—assimilation—had long been rejected as inapplicable.

This absolutist concept of sovereignty is incompatible with any form of federal society; it admits of no third way between total incorporation and total rupture. For three years now guerrilla warfare and terror have been endemic in Algeria; for nearly two years France has been maintaining 600,000 troops and police there, and no end is in sight; both sides are killing and being killed for watchwords which can never be realised —"Algeria is France," "Algeria is an Arab nation." Algeria is neither the one nor the other, but both. It cannot be a part of France, like Brittany or Provence, since it is obvious that Algerians cannot become Frenchmen; nor can Algeria live without France or the million French settlers unless it wishes to revert to barrenness. It is impossible to tear apart these communities which have grown together, without their both dying from the operation. Algeria forms an entity with France, but it is still more inseparably united with North Africa as a whole: the Maghreb, i.e. Tunisia and Morocco, is as solid in support of Arab Algeria as France is with French Algeria. The officers of the African army who assert that the war in Algeria can be won only by the reconquest of the whole of North Africa have consistency on their side. It reflects a truth that was recognised in the 19th century but which *cannot* be valid for the 20th. What is most disturbing is that every responsible French politician knows the solution that offers the only way out, and it is the same solution being urged by responsible politicians in Tunis and Morocco —a Franco-North African federation. What is most disturbing is that any solution for Algeria's future must in advance renounce what the French soldiers believe they are fighting for—the unity and indivisibility of

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the French Republic which includes Algeria; that hardly anyone dares to say this publicly; that rapprochement can be sought only in secret because, in this blind alley of the Jacobin doctrine of unity, a holy war is being fought in which anyone who suggests compromise is branded as a traitor.

THE prospect to-day seems hopeless; but Tunisia and Morocco went through the same depressing years of broken promises, the denial of facts, terror, guerrilla warfare, and assassination, and despite this the leaders of North African nationalism still cling to the idea of a Western, secularised Maghreb, linked with France, which will serve as a bridge and not a barrier to Europe. With all the passions aroused, the fanatical pan-Arab appeals from Cairo find an echo neither in Tunis nor in Rabat. Anger, we know, diminishes the capacity to discriminate, but Cairo is not the Arab world and the Arab world is not Islam. A "crusading" spirit which fails to recognise the differences and blows up these bridges would destroy what may be the last chance for Europe not to decline into little Europe.

South of the Sahara, where the example of the new African dominions of the British Commonwealth is infectious, France is about to outwit the unitary constitution and lay the foundations of an African Commonwealth. But the link between Europe and Africa will be fastened or torn in Algeria, and here it is no longer enough to outwit the constitution. France still holds the key to Africa, as to Europe, and no one can relieve France of the necessity to decide whether the door is barred or opened, for it is a decision about France itself. After the war France proclaimed the French Union, the free association of the peoples of the French empire, and it remained on paper; it put the European community on the order of the day, and when all the other partners had been won over to the idea, removed the item from the agenda. Both ideas came to grief on the same rock—the absolutist doctrine of the one and indivisible national sovereignty. This is what frustrates every initiative; if it is eliminated, what was impossible will become possible. France, which raised the idea of European civilisation to a politico-religious dogma by fusing it with the cult of the nation —*Notre Dame la France*—is experiencing the crisis of the European world order as the crisis of its own self-consciousness, and to the last it has tried desperately to deny the existence of the crisis. For to admit it, transforms the entire image of the world as painfully as did the Copernican revolution, the discovery that this solid earth under our feet was not the fixed and still centre of the universe, that—worse still—it moved. To admit this and to go on living seems impossible; it is the end of the world.

But it is only the end of that world which revolved around Europe as its immovable centre. And in order to go on living—even in the limited material sense of the word—Europe has but one thing to do, but that is a matter of life and death. It must save from the epoch of colonisation what was essential to it, what does not rest on force, the element of universal partnership, however difficult it may be—difficult too, let us not forget, for the colonised of yesterday—to find the road from tutelage to partnership. There is not *one* road and *one* prescription; America's hesitant and tentative attempt to make the United Nations the agency of an international magistracy is as much a part of it as the equally tentative efforts to give Europe a more viable organisation, the building of new bridges between France and North Africa, the looser structure of the British Commonwealth. To keep the world open is Europe's one basic interest, and the interest of the free world, but to do that it must keep itself open to the world. Nothing and nobody compels Europe to travel the road of ancient Greece to the end.

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The Second-Fated

MY STUTTER, my cough, my unfinished sentences,
Denote an inveterate physical reluctance
To use the metaphysical idiom.
Forgive me: what I am saying is, perhaps this:—

Your accepted universe, by Jove's naked hand
Or Esmun's, or Odomankoma's, or Marduk's—
Choose which name jibes—formed scientifically
From whatever there was before Time was,
And begging the question of perfect consequence,
May satisfy the general run of men
(If "run" be an apt term for patent paralytics)
That blueprints destine all they suffer here,
But does not satisfy certain few else.

Fortune enrolled me among the second-fated
Who have read their own obituaries in *The Times*,
Have heard "Where, death, thy sting? Where, grave, thy victory?"
Intoned with unction over all their still clay,
Have seen two parallel red-ink lines drawn
Under their manic-depressive bank accounts,
And are therefore strictly forbidden to walk in grave-yards
Lest they scandalise the sexton and his bride.

We, to be plain with you, taking advantage
Of a brief demise, visited first the Pit,
A library of shades, completed characters;
And next the silver-bright Hyperborean Queendom,
Basking under the sceptre of Guess Whom?
Where pure souls matrilineally foregather.
We were then shot through by merciful lunar shafts
Until hearts tingled, heads sang, and praises flowed;
And learned to scorn your factitious universe
Ruled by the death which we had flouted;
Acknowledging only that from the Dove's egg hatched
Before aught was, but wind—unpredictable
As our second birth would be, or our second love:
A moon-warmed world of discontinuance.

Robert Graves

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Lindsay Anderson

Get Out and Push!

LET'S face it; coming back to Britain is always something of an ordeal. It ought not to be, but it is. And you don't have to be a snob to feel it. It isn't just the food, the sauce bottles on the café tables, and the chips with everything. It isn't just saying good-bye to wine, good-bye to sunshine. After all, there are things that matter even more than these; and returning from the Continent, to-day in 1957, we feel these strongly too. A certain, civilised (as opposed to cultured) quality in everyday life: a certain humour: an atmosphere of tolerance, decency, and relaxation. A solidity, even a warmth. We have come home. But the price we pay is high.

For coming back to Britain is also, in many respects, like going back to the nursery. The outside world, the dangerous world, is shut away: its sounds are muffled. Cretonne curtains are drawn, with a pretty pattern on them of the Queen and her fairy-tale Prince, riding to Westminster in a golden coach. Nanny lights the fire, and sits herself down with a nice cup of tea and yesterday's *Daily Express*; but she keeps half an eye on us too, as we bring out our trophies from abroad, the books and pictures we have managed to get past the customs. (Nanny has a pair of scissors handy, to cut out anything it wouldn't be right for children to see.) The clock ticks on. The servants are all downstairs, watching TV. Mummy and Daddy have gone to the new Noël Coward at the Globe. Sometimes there is a bang from the street outside—a backfire, says Nanny. Sometimes there's a scream from the cellar—Nanny's lips tighten, but she doesn't say anything.... Is it to be wondered at that, from time to time, a window is found open, and the family is diminished by one? We hear of him later sometimes, living in a penthouse in New York, or a *dacha* near Moscow. If he does really well, he is invited home again, years later, and given tea in the drawing-room, and we are told to call him Professor.

It is a cosy enough fantasy, if you like that sort of thing. But unfortunately fantasy tends to become confused with reality, when enough people surrender to it: and this is what seems to have happened here. The only trouble is, we are not alone in the world. We are not even as far away from the rest of it as we used to be. Sometimes the old house trembles, when one of those backfires goes off particularly hard; but if you suggest a bit of

This article, like Kenneth Tynan's and John Osborne's in last month's issue, is excerpted from a longer essay which appears in the symposium, Declaration, *just published by McGibbon and Kee. The omitted portions—for which, unfortunately, there was no space—consist mainly of an analysis of the attitudes of Kingsley Amis, John Wain, and Colin Wilson, as revealed in some of their public utterances. Interested readers are referred to the above-mentioned book.*

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rebuilding, you are looked at as though you've said something disgusting. Why is this? I ask myself. Do people doubt that we have the capacity to re-shape, re-invigorate, to adapt ourselves to the changed conditions of our time? Certainly far too many of us, and particularly those who speak with any kind of authority, seem to be anxiously obsessed about the "Greatness" of Britain—and to be able to conceive it only in the terms of the past. One remembers those nostalgic headlines in the *Daily Sketch*: EDEN GETS TOUGH. SAYS "HANDS OFF OUR CANAL." IT'S *Great* BRITAIN AGAIN!

I work in the cinema, which gives me a further reason for despondency when I return to Britain. Admittedly this is a difficult enough medium to work in anywhere, but in few other parts of the world is so little significant use made of it. My most recent visit to the Continent was to the Tenth International Film Festival at Cannes. We saw films from some thirty-five countries, from East and West, Right and Left. And really, after a winter in London, it was astonishing to find the amount of responsible, meaningful work being done by film-makers in the world outside: humanism breaking through, in Russian pictures as well as American, in films which cost practically nothing from Ceylon as well as in the big-budget affairs from France, Italy, and Japan. Prizes went to Poland, Sweden, France, America, Russia, Rumania, Japan, Yugoslavia . . . Britain did not figure in the list. It is six years since a British feature won a prize at Cannes. And this is not the result of political or economic intrigue: it is a fair reflection of the way our films have fallen out of the running. The cinema reflects, much more immediately than most of the arts, the climate and spirit of a nation. Abroad particularly, where one gains that extra measure of objectivity, it is alarming to see what we produce, what we put up with.

WHAT sort of cinema have we got in Britain? First of all it is necessary to point out that it is an *English* cinema (and Southern English at that), metropolitan in attitude, and entirely middle-class. This combination gives it, to be fair, a few quite amiable qualities: a tolerance, a kind of benignity, a lack of pomposity, an easy-going good nature. But a resolution never to be discovered taking things too seriously can soon become a vice rather than a virtue, particularly when the ship is in danger of going down. To counter-balance the rather tepid humanism of our cinema, it must also be said that it is snobbish, anti-intelligent, emotionally inhibited, wilfully blind to the conditions and problems of the present, dedicated to the preservation of an out-of-date, exhausted national ideal.

These are all quite familiar middle-class—or more precisely upper middle-class—characteristics. Now I know that to many people, mention of "class" always seems to be in bad taste. We are supposed to have risen above all that sort of thing. But we haven't. The grim truth is that we still live in one of the most class-conscious societies in the world, and I see nothing to be gained from the pretence that this is no longer so. The only way, in fact, we can usefully communicate with each other is by being honest about our backgrounds and our inherited prejudices. (This is not the same thing as saying we should hang on to them.) So I state here that I am fully qualified to talk about upper middle-class characteristics, because that is the class into which I was born. My father was an Army officer, and my mother the daughter of a wool-merchant. I was educated at a preparatory school on the South Coast, and at a West Country public school. (*Floruit, floret, floreat. . . .*) Thus, though I dislike as much as anyone the smarty left-wing dismissal of all sentiments of patriotism or fair-play as Public School juvenilia, I need no prompting to admit that most of these characteristics we are discussing stem directly from our upper-class system of education.

The snobbery of our films is not aristocratic. In British films the aristocracy is generally represented by Mr. A. E. Matthews, and is treated, though respectfully, as a fine old figure of fun. Similarly, the functions of working-class characters are chiefly comic, where they are not villainous. They make excellent servants, good tradesmen, and first-

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class soldiers. On the march, in slit trenches, below decks, they crack their funny Cockney jokes or think about the mountains of Wales. They die well, often with a last, mumbled message on their lips to the girl they left behind them in the Old Kent Road; but it is up there on the Bridge that the game is really played, as the officers raise binoculars repeatedly to their eyes, converse in clipped monosyllables (the British cinema has never recovered from Noël Coward as Captain "D"), and win the battles. A young actor with a regional or a Cockney accent had better lose it quick: for with it he will never be able to wear gold braid round his sleeve—and then where are his chances of stardom?

Most people are innocently unaware of the way this kind of snobbery restricts our cinema, as it does our theatre too. I suppose this is because it is so very English in its tone, and therefore whimsical, indulgent, and unselfconscious, never violent, and seldom aggressive; never imagining that it could arouse resentment; sublimely convinced that it reflects the natural order of things. There are elements of truth, even, in its stereotypes; but their untruth is far greater. It is, up to a point, reasonable to show British people as, on the whole, more equable than Italians: but it is merely libellous to insist that our emotions are so bottled up that they have ceased to exist at all. You know the sort of thing. Mrs. Huggett, the policeman's wife, is told of her husband's death in the course of duty. (He has been knifed while attempting to arrest a Teddy Boy for dancing rock-and-roll on the pavement at the Elephant and Castle.) There is a pause, pregnant with nothing. Then Mrs. Huggett speaks, quiet and controlled: "I'll just put these flowers in water." Polite critical applause for another piece of truly British understatement. English film makers, to quote Roy Campbell, use the snaffle and the bit all right—but where's the bloody horse? (The horse, naturally, is out in the stable, round at the back of the house. And that's where we've been told not to go.)

THE number of British films that have ever made a genuine try at a story in a popular milieu, with working-class characters all through, can be counted on the fingers of one hand; and they have become rarer, not more frequent, since the war. Carol Reed's film of *The Stars Look Down*, made in 1939, looks somewhat factitious to-day; but compared with his *A Kid for Two Farthings* two years ago, it is a triumph of neo-realism. The real objection, though, is not so much that "popular" subjects are falsified, as that they are not made at all. Quite recently a friend of mine took a story to a distributor to find out if he would agree to handle the film if it were made. (It is these middlemen, incidentally, who decide what reaches the screen in Britain, not the producers or the public.) The reaction was illuminating. It was a story of working-class people, and it opened in a garage yard, with the men sitting in the sun, eating their lunch-hour sandwiches. One of them, a boy of sixteen, has a cold and needs to wipe his nose. "For pity's sake, get your snot rag out," grumbles one of his mates. The distributor's decision was unequivocal, and its grounds clearly expressed. "It starts on that social level, and it never rises above it. Audiences just don't want to see that sort of thing." And this is why—even if the talent to make them were around—equivalents of *Marty* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Two Pennyworth of Hope* and *The Childhood of Maxim Gorky* cannot be produced in this England.

This virtual rejection of three-quarters of the population of this country represents more than a ridiculous impoverishment of the cinema. It is characteristic of a flight from contemporary reality by a whole, influential section of the community. And, which is worse, by reason of their control of the cinema, they succeed in imposing their distorted view of the present on their massive and impressionable audience. According to the testimony of our film-makers (the oath is administered by the Censor), Britain is a country without problems, in which no essential changes have occurred for the last fifty years, and which still remains the centre of an Empire on which the sun will never have the bad manners to set. Nothing is more significant of this determination to go on living in

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the past than the succession of war films which British studios have been turning out for the last four or five years, and which shows no sign of coming to an end. Now of course there are many different ways of making films about war. You can make a film like *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which is an outcry against the whole abomination. Our war films are not like that. Or, like the Poles in the last few years, you can keep returning to the war because you are obsessed by it; because it crystallised a conflict, an essential aspiration; because it evokes ghosts that have to be exorcised. But when the Poles showed *Kanal* at Cannes, they prefaced it with an announcement. "This film," they said, "is not made as an exciting entertainment. It is made as a reminder of what occurred, and as a warning, that such things should not be allowed to happen again." We do not make war films like this either. These stories continue to be made in Britain firstly because they are profitable. Secondly, because the world of the services is one which perpetuates the traditional social set-up of the country, its distinctions of class and privilege. And thirdly, because by escaping into war, we can evade the complex uncertainties of the present, and the challenge of the future. Back there, chasing the *Graf Spee* again in the Battle of the River Plate, tapping our feet to the March of the Dam Busters, we can make believe that our issues are simple ones—it's *Great* Britain again!

In 1945, it is often said, we had our revolution. It is true we had something; though for a revolution it was a little incomplete. According to the British cinema, however, nothing happened at all. The nationalisation of the coalfields; the Health Service; nationalised railways; compulsory secondary education—events like these, which cry out to be interpreted in human terms, have produced no films. Nor have many of the problems which have bothered us in the last ten years: strikes; Teddy Boys; nuclear tests; the loyalties of scientists; the insolence of bureaucracy.... The presence of American troops among us has gone practically unremarked; so have the miners from Italy and the refugees from Hungary. It is only with reference to facts such as these that criticism of British films can now have any relevance; for, on the present level, æsthetic discussion can hardly be more than a game. What we need to consider is the image of ourselves that our cinema is bent on creating, and whether we, as a nation, should continue to accept that image. Further, we must question the significance, and the justice, of the use those in political and financial control of us are content to make of this powerful, essentially democratic medium.

THE cinema is an industry. This is a statement which no one is likely to contest. It is also an art—and most people will allow that too. But it is something else as well: it is a means of communication, of making connections. Now this makes it peculiarly relevant to a problem of the most urgent importance to us—and it is admitted to be so by both of our effective political parties. I mean the problem of community —the need for a sense of belonging together —of being prepared to make sacrifices for the common good. Naturally, it is only in difficult times that we hear these principles invoked by politicians. Then: "All hands to the pumps!" they call. But it is no use expecting to find the deck hands running unless they have been made to feel, earlier in the voyage, that the ship is theirs, and worth their trouble to save. That they are a part of it. One of the most powerful ways of helping people to feel this is by making films. There was a time when this was understood in this country, at least by a few. In the thirties the British documentary movement, led by John Grierson, built up a tradition of good, social-democratic film-making. And when the war came, and the G.P.O. unit could be transformed directly into Crown Film Unit, the nation was very happy to reap the benefit. During a war it is useful to be able to appeal to national democratic sentiments. ("Your courage, Your hard work, Your cheerfulness will bring Us victory" as that unfortunate poster put it.) But after a war, when the slogan is "Back to Business as Usual!" democratic sentiments are apt to seem unnecessary,

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and such appeals are discontinued. It is true that Crown continued to function for a time, making films about health, about education, about the national economy; but this was under the Labour Government. With the return of the Tories, in 1951, the unit was disbanded. It had become a luxury. And to-day it is practically impossible to make films of this kind in Britain. There is no money for them (except in rare and special cases) from the Treasury. They are not wanted by the men who book for the circuit cinemas. Their speculative production is out of the question. Who are the losers by this situation —the business men? Or the community?

"It is vitally important that words like Duty and Service should come back into fashion. . . ." So Lord Hailsham told the nation in a recent political broadcast. But questions prompt themselves: Duty to whom, and why? Service to what ideal? One is again reminded of that wartime poster. And when Mr. Macmillan, making his first broadcast as Prime Minister, talks about "dreary equality," we recognise the concept of society that inspires him. We are back with the hierarchy, the self-idealised *élite* of class and wealth, the docile middle-classes, and the industrious, devoted army of workers. "All things Bright and Beautiful. . . . The Rich Man in his Castle, the Poor Man at his Gate. . . ." "Wider still and wider Shall thy Bounds be set. . . ." These are the songs Mr. Macmillan will lead us in, with additional verses by Sir Arthur Bryant and A. L. Rowse, and *The Times* to lead the admonitory choruses. . . .

FUNDAMENTALLY, our problems to-day are all problems of adjustment: we have somehow to evolve new social relationships within the nation, and a new relationship altogether with the world outside. Britain—an industrial, imperialist country that has lost its economic superiority and its empire, has yet to find, or to accept, its new identity. The irresolution expresses itself widely, and in many different ways: in discontent or opportunism among young people, in nostalgic complaints and futile bombast from the established Right, and in a weary shrugging of the shoulders from those who were Pink, or even Red, twenty years ago. But the real question remains unanswered. If "Land of Hope and Glory" is to be decently shelved, what song are we to sing?

In literal as well as metaphorical terms, the answer of the Left is so far inadequate. I have rarely heard a more depressing sound than the singing of those few, indomitable, old-fashioned Leftists who raised their voices in chorus at the end of the Suez demonstration in Trafalgar Square.

Let cowards flinch and traitors sneer—
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here . . .

It was more of a moan than a song; and no wonder. For how can a tired old vision like this expect to win new allegiances to-day?

I am not going to say that the British Labour movement is as out of touch with the present as the Tories. Their stake is in the future, and they are under no such temptation to romanticise the past. But their failure of imagination has been hardly less disastrous. The old, moral inspiration of radicalism has dribbled away, and its loss has certainly not been made good by Fabian intellectualism. The trade unions are as capable of philistine, narrowly sectional actions as the Tories—perhaps even more so. The internationalism of the Left was not strong enough to extend open and unqualified help even to the Hungarian miners; and in place of a forthright appeal to the common sense and conscience of the nation, the Labour Party descended at the last General Election to a campaign frankly bourgeois and paternalistic in its inspiration: the chintz armchair—the Premier with his Pipe—"You can trust Mr. Attlee!" They deserved to lose.

We have a thousand problems to resolve in this country, but the essential one is this: What kind of Britain do we want? What ideal are we going to set ourselves in our re-ordering of society? What truths do *we* hold to be self-evident? These are not abstract questions, or even political questions in any professional sense: their answers will affect the lives and work of all of us who do not regard ourselves

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as predestined outsiders. At least the Tory position is frank, with its rejection of equality as a 'dreary' ideal, and its determination to return to the old way of a privileged society and a capitalist economy. It is Socialism which has yet to present its solution dynamically, to shake off its complexes of inferiority and opposition, to speak with confidence, and from the heart. We are still between Arnold's two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born; and the frustrated exasperation that inevitably results, particularly among the young and ardent, has been one of the most significant phenomena of recent years:

There aren't any good, brave causes left. If the big bang does come, and we all get killed off, it won't be in aid of the old-fashioned, grand design. It'll just be for the Brave New-nothing-very-much-thank-you....

It was at this point in *Look Back in Anger* that a friend of mine wanted to jump to his feet and call out: "What about Suez?" I knew what he meant, but it would have been a silly thing to do. John Osborne could, of course, have made Jimmy Porter a resolute and positive Leftist, but in that case he would have written a different play—and, things being what they are, probably a less interesting one. It would also be a great deal too facile to dismiss Jimmy Porter's angry point of view as merely the rationalisation of his neurosis: this is what most of the elder critics attempted to do, in their reluctance, or their inability, to interpret the portents. ("A young man at the centre of the stage, self-pitying, attitudinising, talks at length, cheaply, violently, foolishly...."—Mr. J. C. Trewin.) But the public came; and largely a young public. What did they see? Not merely, presumably, the hysterical boor which is all the central character could seem to the middle-aged, unperceptive eye; but a tremendously forceful expression of their own disgust with contemporary hypocrisies, and at the same time a reflection of their own sense of confusion and lack of focus. This was the heartening thing: that here at last was a young writer, using the language of to-day, giving passionate expression to his uncertainty and his frustrated idealism—and being received by his contemporaries at least, with understanding and enthusiasm.

IT IS not really Osborne's anger that is significant, so much as the complement of it: his baffled aspiration, his insistence on a human emotional commitment. These are qualities that have been out of fashion for a long time. Indeed it is ironic to find Osborne's name linked journalistically (as an "angry young man") with two other writers who are fashionable precisely because they express the directly opposite attitude to his own. Both Kingsley Amis and John Wain have a certain satirical view of society which gives them a remote affinity to Jimmy Porter; but basically they are both of them anti-idealist, anti-emotional, and tepid or evasive about their social commitments. They are depressingly representative in all this of what we may call the *"liberal"* establishment....

I put "liberalism" in inverted commas, because the genuinely liberal spirit is one which I respect, indeed do my best to express. But there is not much of it around in Britain at the moment. What we have in its place is a weak-limbed caricature, featuring only its most pallid virtues. This kind of liberal will commit himself to nothing more specific, or more dynamic, than a vague notion of "decency." He is on the humane side. He opposes the Death Penalty; he disapproves of our action in Suez. But his reactions are all *against*: his faiths are all negative. Tolerance is the most positive virtue he can accept, and for a political ideal he can find nothing more inspiring than the ambition "not to find himself bossed around by a totalitarian government"*—though this can hardly be more than a pious hope on his part, since he is mistrustful of political programmes, and does not really believe in the efficacy of political action. Politically, in fact, he exists in a vacuum, as Amis admits (though he implies, wrongly, that this is the inevitable position of a "member of the intelligentsia," instead of simply a sad self-portrait). He is prepared to dislike,

* Kingsley Amis. *Socialism and the Intellectuals.*

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or deplore, particular phenomena in our society, as John Wain dislikes the entertainment industry and the cheap press, but he is not prepared to make connections between abuses and the system which produces them. His paper is the *Observer*.

The broad division of this country between Conservative and Labour (with a floating vote of "liberals") is not a division between good and bad, right and wrong (and this naturally goes for the "liberals" too, with whom this paper belongs). We believe that the two great political parties represent sections of the community that are of equally great merit; that there is equal value in the basic attitude, conservative and radical, which each represents.

At first sight this quotation from an *Observer* editorial (for New Year, 1957) might appear to be an affirmation of a principle, a statement of mature Liberalism. That is obviously what was meant. But where (again) is the bloody horse? In fact, affirmations of this kind amount to nothing more than a refusal to take the responsibility of analysing the situation in which we find ourselves to-day, and of agreeing on a consistent policy by which to deal with it. Effects remain unrelated to causes. . . .

There is no need to be an economist, or a political theorist, to understand that the world has changed, and that attitudes which sufficed a hundred years ago are not adequate to-day. Industrialism and mass education have transformed society, and crowded it to a point where everything impinges on, and affects, everything else. We can no longer afford the luxury of *laissez-faire*, and if we try, we are going to find that it is the most pernicious elements that come out on top. I have not got these ideas out of a book, nor from listening to the wireless, but from personal experience. I have learned that it is impossible to work in the cinema, or usefully to discuss it, without reference to the system within which films are produced; and once that reference is made, it is impossible not to consider the basis of the system, the way it has grown, the motives which sustain it, and the interests that it serves. The kind of cinema it produces, and the kind of cinema it suppresses. And such considerations lead me inevitably to a political position. They do not make me a politician, nor a propagandist; but they give me direction. Naturally, they affect the way I look at things.

All this is extremely simple; and I am rather amazed that it should need to be said. But it is not only the "liberals" who refuse to make these primary connections. We find them equally shunned by intellectuals all along the Left, to whom art remains a diversion or an "æsthetic experience," and Brecht is a bore. It is this, perhaps, as much as anything, which explains the deadness, the triviality, and ultimately the complete irrelevance of practically all the publicised artwork in this country at the moment. And in particular, of course, this applies to those channels of criticism and discussion, those disseminators of thought, the week-end reviews, the "serious Sundays," and the critical programmes of the B.B.C. Right or Left here make no odds: it is a coterie world, perfectly directionless, a world of word-spinning and self-display, and it exists in a political limbo. (This is almost inevitable since the same people write in all the magazines.) From time to time gestures are made, allusions struck, which might seem to impinge on the outside world; but the only essential references are to other works of art, wine, or the personal foibles of the author. Ideas here have become totally dissociated from communal life, and the only audience considered worth addressing is the cultivated, "liberal" few, who are flattered rather than discouraged by the implication that they belong to a minority.

The Rest is Silence *is a maddening novel, like a joke parcel, you go on unwrapping and find there is nothing really there . . . it leaves you feeling as if you had been turning over the pages of one of those unreadable magazines which you find in the lounges of Swiss hotels.*

We are all existentialists nowadays, at least

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in the same vague, popular sense it was ever true to say we were all socialists. . . .

It was a great performance, but can I add —after being allowed to embrace Mme Feuillère figuratively and with infinite respect —that it was not the greatest conceivable performance? . . . I am almost sure I heard, with my own ears,

Soleil, je te viens voir pour la dernier' fois.

Is it possible that Mme Feuillère could have missed one of the most beautiful e mutes in French literature? I prefer to think I had a momentary black-out . . .

It is surely preposterous that our leading radical weekly should address its readers in terms like these—for all three quotations are from the *New Statesman*, and none of them is parody. They illustrate perfectly what George Orwell, writing of the left-wing intelligentsia in *England Your England*, described as their "severance from the common culture of the country"; and they illustrate too (in their manner as much as their matter) how the cultural climate of the Left remains that of the *status quo*. This languid, oversophisticated, salon voice is not one that could ever, conceivably, touch the conscience or inspire the heart to make new affirmations.

Some people may feel that this is unimportant; that culture and politics are unrelated. It is not, and they aren't. A socialism that cannot express itself in emotional, human, poetic terms is one that will never capture the imagination of the people—who are poets even if they don't know it. And conversely, artists and intellectuals who despise the people, imagine themselves superior to them, and think it clever to talk about the "Ad-Mass," are both cutting themselves off from necessary experience, and shirking their responsibilities. . . .

NO DOUBTS about it: we need a new intelligentsia just as much to-day as we did in 1941, when *England Your England* was written. It is depressing indeed to find how little things have changed. A young writer like Amis will criticise Orwell (amongst other things, for encouraging "political quietism"!), but he apparently fails to perceive how he, and his own generation, conform to the pattern of snobbishness and pusillanimity which Orwell exposed. The hope that the war might destroy these barriers, these inhibitions, has been proved vain: that sense of comradeship and mutual aid has vanished as though it had never been. To Amis himself now, any kind of direct relationship with working-people seems to imply unthinkable embarrassment, and he can only deal with it in facetious terms: "I cannot see myself explaining, to an audience of dockers, say, just why homosexual relations between consenting adults should be freed from legal penalty." I suppose this is meant to be funny; but what a disagreeable ignorance of what working-class people are really like. He ought to try the experiment he describes. He might be surprised to find that his own enlightenment is not so very much superior to that of the working men—he might even get a good poem out of it. . . .

Yet perhaps the prospect is not as desperate as it looks. For at least certain myths, which have dominated and retarded us for far too long, have been lately exploded. The myth of the imperialist, hierarchic society has foundered at Suez and can never be raised again; and the myth of Russian-Communist infallibility, which for so many years absolved our left-wing intellectuals from the duty of thinking for themselves, has gone with the Twentieth Party Conference and the Russian action in Hungary. Are we to feel lost and deserted as a result? Or are we going to be capable of at last accepting our responsibilities to the present, and of finding political maturity? I started this essay with a despondent fantasy of the domestic scene. But it is not obligatory that the British intellectual should surrender to the pressures which would keep him, patronised and ineffective, in the nursery; nor is his only solution to escape. He could stay at home, grow up, and take over his inheritance.

If we are to do this, one of the first things we will have to learn is to talk to each other. This may seem an odd thing to say, when there is so evidently too much talk already;

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but I mean talk that relates to actuality, not just the incessant chasing of ideas round a wall of death. Useful controversy is something that is almost impossible tc achieve at the moment: discussion has become a game, in which there is general agreement that we should lay off personalities, that dog should not examine dog too closely, and speaking should not be frank. The result is a thick and airless atmosphere of common-room theorising, in which to be too outspoken or specific is to be judged guilty of bad taste, or exhibitionism. . . .

I have a feeling—and I hope it is more than a hope—that it is no longer seriousness that is felt to be a bore (particularly among younger people), so much as obsessional flippancy and the weary cult of the "amusing." When the *Universities and Left Review* appeared, in the spring of 1957, it was reviewed neither in the *New Statesman*, the *Observer*, the *Sunday Times*, nor *The Times*. Yet it sold out its first edition, reprinted, and sold out again. I take this as a portent. Perhaps people are beginning to understand that we can no longer afford the luxury of scepticism, that we must start again believing in belief. "Only Connect . . ." said Forster, a long time ago; and it was a marvellously wise thing to say. But then, more recently, he told us that he did not believe in belief. Perhaps it is that that has muffled him. "We had far better put our industry into being clever than into being good," wrote V. S. Pritchett the other day in the *New Statesman*. The antithesis is not so much false, as old-fashioned.

Of course Lord Hailsham is right, and we must start being able to use words like duty, service, obligation, and hope again without blushing—and community, and conscience, and love. But it is more than just a matter of bringing such terms back into fashion by using them in a party political broadcast. It is going to take a revolution to make these words clean, to revitalise the ideals they stand for, after their debasement at the hands of journalists, politicians, and copy-writers. And only a revolution of this kind can save us.

I MAY seem to have come a long way from the cinema: but the connections are direct. In our country to-day, if you take a camera and lights into a factory, or a coal mine, or a market, there is always a time to go through in which the cry is "J. Arthur Rank's here again!" "Come on, Clark Gable!" or "Send for Diana Dors!" And this is not because the British are hopelessly self-conscious, or unimaginative, or facetious. It is because the cinema, as it is at present, can mean nothing to them except in terms of commercial parody. I want a Britain in which the cinema can be respected and understood by everybody, as an essential part of the creative life of the community. And if I have made a forty-minute film about the people of Covent Garden, I do not want to be told that I must cut it to eighteen minutes if I want British audiences to see it—because American feature films are running long this year. Those good and friendly faces deserve a place of pride on the screens of their country; and I will fight for the notion of community which will give it to them.

Fighting means commitment, means believing what you say, and saying what you believe. It will also mean being called sentimental, irresponsible, self-righteous, extremist, and out-of-date by those who equate maturity with scepticism, art with amusement, and idealism with romantic excess. And it must mean a new kind of intellectual and artist, who is not frightened or scornful of his fellows; who does not see himself as threatened by, and in natural opposition to, the philistine mass; who is eager to make his contribution, and ready to use the mass-media to do so. By his nature, the artist will always be in conflict with the false, the narrow-minded, and the reactionary: there will always be people who do not understand the relevance of what he is doing: he will always have to fight for his values. But one thing is certain: in the values of humanism, and in their determined application to our society, lies the future. All we have to do is to believe in them.

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Edward Seidensticker

The World's Cities: Tokyo

IT DOES not take long to become an Old Resident of Tokyo, only a little more than the two years considered standard by the diplomatic corps and the foundations. Then the years begin of trying to show newcomers the city. There can be few cities in which this particular duty of the Old Resident is more trying: for there is almost nothing to show.

The newcomer who wants to be shown the city has probably come in at night, because trans-Pacific planes have a way of coming in at night. He is up early the next morning, and he wants to see the city. None of the tricks that would work in a European capital will work here. Unless there is a special exhibition, the museums are not impressive. Too much of the best art is in provincial temples and private collections. The traditional theatre is good, but a couple of afternoons will take care of it. The Westernised theatre is sometimes very good, but why take anyone to see *The Merchant of Venice* in Japanese, even if Portia happens to be the leading actress in Japan? The visitor's chief impression will probably be that the Japanese leg was not made for tights. It takes a musician to find anything in traditional Japanese music the first dozen times or so, and as for Western music—it may be very good, but why come all the way to Tokyo for it? Or sports, unless it is the enormous *sumô* wrestlers, who perform only four weeks a year? The Japanese are fine baseball players, but the New York Yankees are better. There are always the Tourist Industries: dancers whose bosoms show with impossible clearness under their kimonos, and sukiyaki restaurants whose delicate bowls of rice would send an Oriental stalking from the room. And there are the geisha, very expensive and very hard work. You have to entertain them, not the reverse.

There are few sights. The Palace moat, once the inner moat to Edo Castle, is much as it always was, except for several six-lane avenues cutting across the part of the old castle grounds that is now a public park. The escarpments inside the moat present to the north a face of venerable masonry, now a mossy grey-green, and to the south a soft expanse of hand-trimmed grass, surmounted by pine trees that trail off in the misty, indecisive way Japanese pines have. We are told that the first Tokugawa Shogun faced a hostile north and had friends behind him to the south; hence the grassy embankments. In any case, the variety is fortunate. Here and there an angle tower survives, and, except for the gold-buttoned policemen, some of the back gates to the Palace could be as they were when the last Shogun turned it over to the Emperor in 1868.

And where do you take the newcomer next? There are some late and architecturally undistinguished pagodas, and a scattering of florid gates where the daimyos had their mansions. The tombs of the Shoguns, now sooty and weed-grown, are on a chilly autumn afternoon an impressive testimonial to the

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impermanence of things; but you have to know the chink in the wall and the unpadlocked gate, and sneak in when the policeman is not looking.

The newcomer begins to look puzzled. What about temples? Almost none worth showing, except as a lesson in how not to use a building material. Some of the larger ones destroyed during the war have been rebuilt with the last details of the wooden bracketing reproduced in concrete, and the whole painted over with vermilion lacquer, as though to keep away termites. Views? The visitor has already had the best view, coming into Haneda Airport at night, and all you can offer now is the ferris wheel atop the Takashimaya Department Store, from which he can see block after insubstantial block stretching off towards the harbour. "It really is better at night," you say, but without conviction. The Old City, the Intra-muros? Tiny fragments here and there: a few houses below the Yushima Shrine, and a few more on a strange little island in the harbour where the same fisher families have lived for centuries.

The truth is that Tokyo is not really an old city, and it is moreover the most impermanent of cities. Very little in it goes back more than thirty years. The city was destroyed once in the earthquake and fire of 1923 and again in the bombings of 1944 and 1945. Depreciated at the standard rate, a house that has been standing since before the earthquake is probably now below zero, and the owner has a terrible time borrowing money on it. If its history can be traced back much before the turn of the century, he is likely to find that he has a monument on his hands, and must submit to busloads of children (being educated the Dewey way) and commissions for the preservation of cultural properties.

It is with relief that one admits defeat—Tokyo takes getting used to—and sends the newcomer off to Kyoto. There, without the help of the Old Resident, he can find temples and gardens, and geisha with engagingly false Kyoto accents. In Kyoto the geishas walk about the streets and pose on bridges and under wistaria arbours, pretty as postcards. In Tokyo they whisk from one engagement to the next, and you would never know them except for the fact that they are the only people in the city who still use rickshaws.

THE JAPANESE seem to have two solutions to the problem. The first is to go looking at sites and graves. "Literary Tour" or "Historical Tour" in hand, they go hunting for the site of the temple from which, in 1657, a burning kimono flew off in the wind, set fire to the city, and killed 18,000 people; or the house from which, tradition has it, the pathetic heroine of a Meiji novel saw her student-lover off for Germany. The city is rich in sites, major and minor, and all carefully labelled; but you are

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likely to find only a placard before a bicycle shop. "In the space between this sign and the public lavatory to the east, the novelist Ichiyô wrote her masterpiece while selling hardware to support her mother and sister." Then there are graves: graves of statesmen and graves of literary men, and even graves of villains, such as the greengrocer's daughter who, in 1683, tried setting fire to the city because she hoped in the excitement to meet her lover. How the Japanese dote upon graves! Some of them are indeed very beautiful, and when the cherries are in bloom the cemeteries are probably the most attractive parts of the city. However, charming though the newcomer may find the story that goes with it, the grave of O-shichi the greengrocer's daughter bores him.

The other Japanese solution is to show off the modern parts of the city, and the sort of places an American would visit in Washington. Time after time in novels one is taken on the standard tour: the Diet Building, the War and Navy Ministries, the Double Bridge for obeisance to His Imperial Majesty, headquarters of the Guards Regiment, the Yasukuni Shrine (roughly equivalent to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier), the outer gardens of the Meiji Shrine (Lincoln Memorial?), and so on. Of the ministries, mostly red brick and peeling concrete, the only thing to say is that they look even worse on the inside. There is a certain sphinx-like fascination in the crouching, ungainly Diet Building. Cartoonists delight in showing it as a jack-in-the-box, with a new procurement scandal or police law springing from the squat steeple. But there is no point in taking the visitor to see it. He will have seen more than enough of it from wherever he looks by the time he leaves Tokyo.

As for the business and entertainment districts, they teem with life and they are brilliantly lighted. The most interesting building is still the Imperial Hotel, which dates from before the earthquake. It is hard to know what Frank Lloyd Wright had in mind. The Imperial is the most aggressively unfunctional of buildings, full of blind corridors and staircases that terminate in locked doors, and only the *real* Old Resident knows how to find his way from the front door to the parking lot in the back. To say that the Imperial Hotel is either beautiful or ugly is somehow to miss the point. It is interesting. Among the other modern buildings, few are as interesting as the sewer and subway excavations interminably going on before them.

Every new foreign style has left its alluvium. Foreign-style buildings are not as perishable as the old wooden buildings were. Tokyo Central Station is supposed to be Renaissance, but I cannot be sure that it is. It is red brick, and it wanders from an octagonal tower through a rectangular tower to another hexagonal tower. There are gravely unadorned buildings that look sometimes like the Chicago Sullivan style and sometimes like ocean liners. Since the war there has been a great vogue for bright, modern buildings, all pastels and glass. The pastels tend to look

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tired after a few seasons in the rain. As for the glass, one shudders. Some day there will be an earthquake, and rubbernecking middle-school children in from the country will be decapitated by the score.

Tokyo does indeed take getting used to. Its charm is not on the grey, formless surface. "Where then is the charm?" asks the newcomer. Well, he must walk the streets until he sees for himself. The roar about him is not just the roar of trains and taxicabs. It is also the roar of sinews and blood. A good Buddhist, in the days when the species survived, might have described Tokyo with mild disapproval as smelling of meat; Walt Whitman might have said that it had the fine, clean smell of armpits. Tokyo is a stewing mass of people, and there are no beautiful, dead surfaces to distract one from the vitality once it is known.

TOKYO stands on an obvious site for a great city. At the head of Tokyo Bay, it commands the land and water approaches to the largest level area in Japan, the Kanto Plain. It took some centuries for the virtues of the site to be recognised, however. In the 8th century, when Nara was far too pretentious a capital for a sparsely populated little island kingdom, and on through the middle ages, when Kyoto must at times have been the largest city in the world, the Kanto Plain was harsh, semi-wild frontier country, the land of unruly warriors and winter winds from Siberia. The most famous early literary reference to it is in a poem by a courtier who couldn't wait to get back to Kyoto. In the late middle ages, when the great Nô dramatists gave Japanese mediæval gloom its most subtle expression, they saw the Kanto Plain as the murkiest outer edge of a very murky world. In one of the most moving of the Nô plays, a mother discovers her child's grave on the banks of this same Sumida River, and the pathos is heightened by the fact that she has searched to the harsher ends of the earth.

In the 15th century, exactly five hundred years ago, a local dignitary built a castle on hills overlooking the bay. Even then, the centre of power in north-eastern Japan lay some distance to the south. In 1590, the man who later became the first Tokugawa Shogun arrived in the Kanto district and proceeded to fortify Edo (the name of Tokyo until 1868). In 1608 he established his Shogunate there. The court was left behind in Kyoto and encouraged to study the tea ceremony, which it did with reasonable docility for the next two centuries or so. The military nobility, on the other hand, were required to maintain establishments in Edo, where the Shogun could watch them. They occupied the hills over the bay, and land had to be filled in to take care of the commoners. With the hills and the reclaimed flats thus divided by a rigid social line, the plebeian became assertively plebeian. He cleared his speech of effete diphthongs, and set about cultivating an Edo manner.

For the first century of the Shogunate, residents of Edo must have been hard put to think of it as civilised. The 17th century was a happy time for Japanese literature and art, but considerably happier in Osaka and Kyoto than in Edo. One of the most famous of 17th-century artists rather brusquely refused the Shogun's invitation to come to Edo. The military lords and the warriors must have sometimes found themselves wishing that they were in a position to do likewise. There is a wistful note in the Kyoto place-names one finds scattered around central Tokyo.

By the 18th century, the great day of Edo, the island culture (these were the centuries of isolation) was beginning to look a little over-ripe. One has the feeling that the city came upon the scene too late. The old cliché about America might be applied with some truth: that it moved without transition from barbarism to decadence. The literature of the 18th and early 19th centuries, when Edo had become the unquestioned cultural centre of the country, has a warmed-over taste, and even the colour print went into a sharp decline after a brief flowering in the late 18th century. With qualifications, it might be described as a plebeian after-glow of the great Kyoto decorative schools of the 16th and 17th centuries.

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It is hard to imagine that Edo ever made its mark as one of the beautiful cities of Japan. Even when, for a few years, it happened to be free of earthquakes and fires, the Siberian winds must have given it a gaunt, weather-beaten look. The arched bridges and the courtesans strolling across them in flowing summer kimonos were no doubt charming, and the gallants rowing up the canals on their way to the pleasure quarters were no doubt dashing; but the heart of the city was still a wind-blown flat, hard and dusty in the winter, often inundated in the spring and fall, and alive with mosquitoes in the summer. Then, as now, the city must have been a difficult one to show visitors. One can imagine the "child of Edo" (so we must call him, for so he called himself) showing the visitor from Kyoto the flowers of Edo culture and the grey, formless surface, and finally telling him to go wander about the streets if he would discover the real charm of the city.

IT WAS the famous Edo manner that the visitor must find. Today the most ill-tempered remarks about Tokyo are received with equanimity. Indeed people seem to enjoy them. There is one convention, however, to challenge which is to risk displeasure: that Tokyo men are men, and Kyoto women are women. (Kyoto men are of course beneath contempt. Little is said of Tokyo women.) Two centuries ago, the child of Edo required that substantially the same convention be accepted. He held that he himself was sufficient justification for the city. It pleased him to come back from Kyoto and find that the dried sardines of Edo were much more fun, such a finer, manlier crunch, than the spineless delicacies of the Emperor's capital. It pleased him to offer salted crackers as almost the only dish Edo produced with surpassing skill. The child of Edo had *iki*—call it aplomb, dash, spruceness—and the *iki* might have been dimmed if the city and its culture had been more splendid.

On the whole, the Edo commoner was successful in creating the impression that what was in Edo was good, for it had *iki*, and he himself especially so. Perhaps there *were* mosquitoes in Fukugawa as late as the middle of January. Where else would you find such brave mosquitoes? The Osaka merchant became a country bumpkin. He may have had money and a fine business sense, but he lacked the *iki* to be noted immediately in any Edo carpenter. And Osaka speech was not for men, but for women and children. The Edo shopkeeper managed to make a show of contempt for even the military nobility. The Yamanoté, the hills where the great ones had their mansions, became the Noté, much as the Americans become the Amé today. *Iki* dominated the city's notions of beauty and ethics; and it was a concept imposed with triumphant success by the townsman making the best of his dried sardines and salted crackers and dirty, windswept city.

It was also a concept that had its limitations. It would be a great mistake to see the hearty Edo townsman as the equivalent of the hearty English yeoman. His assertiveness, if the word is not too strong, was a question more of manner than of principle. After all, a successful display of *iki*, even he would have had to admit, depended on the fact that his city was the Shogun's capital. There may have been a few intellectuals who, if they had pursued their premises far enough, would have come up with conclusions highly unsettling for the Shogunate; but Edo was not a threat to the Shoguns as London and Paris were to the kings. The child of Edo wanted mostly to keep things going as they were.

So, with half its mind, did the whole country. There were pressures for change from within, and there was a growing realisation that the country would one day be opened. The Russians were coming down from the north, disturbing emissaries appeared in Nagasaki, and finally Perry was in Edo Bay itself. But there was also a longing to snuggle deeper into the comfortable island burrow. Conservative, xenophobic Edo, which claimed perfection for itself and its spruce manner, seemed to live the desire more intensely than the rest of the country. Even Kyoto was less involuted, as can be seen by the way it set about making itself a tourist centre once the Emperor had left the city for

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good. One of the chief worries of the Edoite during the disturbances that brought the Emperor to Edo and made the city Tokyo, the Eastern Capital, seems to have been over the closing of the Kabuki theatres for a few weeks.

But the changes did come, and soon "enlightenment" was the rage. Tokyo led the country in the rush to catch up with the world and be enlightened, as though its mission was to step up the two contradictory forces pulling at the Japanese. In Kyoto and Osaka, the burghers themselves turned to face the problems of the new day. In Tokyo, there was a split, and Tokyo is the better symbol of the country, which often seems to be running forward and backward simultaneously.

ONE OF the most common characters in the popular comic monologues is the *waka-danna*, the "young master" who has a surplus of Edo *iki* and a talent for ruining the family business. The child of Edo likes to think that there is much of the *waka-danna* in his make-up, and that he is no match for the Osakan when it comes to business. There seems to be a great deal of evidence to support the belief. When the changes came, it was not the old resident of the city who took advantage of them. The new ruling clique was from the far southwest. It was Osaka that finally came to dominate Tokyo journalism. Two of the three largest newspapers in the city today are comparatively late arrivals from Osaka, and one finds with surprising regularity that the more pestiferous of the journalising intellectuals are from Osaka or still farther south and west. In the early years of this century an Osaka theatre syndicate began to move into Tokyo, and today it dominates the legitimate stage and controls a very large chunk of the movies. Restaurants that offer Osaka cooking have driven Edo cooking into a few unobtrusive little pockets. The glamorous pleasure quarters beloved of the Edo townsman are now the tawdriest accumulations of bawdy houses (you pay by the hour). The elegant geisha districts of modern Tokyo grew up nearer the ministries, for the convenience of the rustic samurai who were the new bureaucrats. Even baseball is dominated by Osaka and the western prefectures. The Tokyo Giants would be forlorn indeed if they lost their Osaka players. The Osaka Tigers could get by very well without Tokyo.

All in all, the old Edo merchant class did not make much of a showing in the new Tokyo. The novelist Tanizaki Junichirô, himself a member of the class, has described them as "the defeated." He has little sympathy for them, and thinks that they asked for everything they got; and yet even as he tells it, the story of the diaspora of the Edoites to the southern and western suburbs—far from flats through which they once strode with such aplomb—is very touching.

Yet the child of Edo is still very much a part of the city, for it is a city of nostalgia. There are those two opposite urges, we must remember, and even as it bustles energetically towards the future (leaving the Edoite to run for the suburbs) it looks to the past with a sorrow that is sometimes sweet and sometimes bitter (and invites the Edoite to indulge in what he is best at, reminiscing). Since little survives except sites, most of what is written about the city is an untranslateable mish-mash of place-names.

There is a class of professional reminiscers who seem to make a good living at the work. They do not have to be old. They only have to be children of Edo, born somewhere in the plebeian flats, and they do not have to reminisce about the distant past. The city changes so fast that the Flapper Era and the Era of the Assassinations have melted pleasantly into the 18th century. Even though the true son of Edo was thoroughly dispossessed by the time flappers and popular music and taxicabs arrived, he has managed to assert his dominion over the whole of the past. It is he, and not the late arrival from the provinces, who must tell how it was when straw-coloured streetcars came to the Ginza.

Some of the journalist-reminiscers are very good, and one first-rate novelist, Nagai Kafû, has made the changing city his subject. Actually he does not quite qualify for the work he has chosen, because, though a native of

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Tokyo, he is from a samurai and not a merchant family; but he behaves as the true Edoite should. He seems able to control his material only when he is writing of a Tokyo that is dead or dying. Sometimes he tries describing the city as it is at the moment, and when he does he only reports. It is difficult to describe the power of his best works. They are full of empty houses and people who do not belong, and more often than not it is late autumn; and behind everything is the most impermanent of cities, its dead past so palpable because such a short time away.

WHILE the child of Edo reminisced, the city was off about other business. The Emperor had arrived, the country was open to the barbarians, and Japan must not be left behind. The Japanese have a terrific fear of falling behind. It nagged at them through the centuries of seclusion, and now it exploded in a mad rush to catch up. The day of the New Men had come, the day of the intellectuals and the entrepreneurs. While the entrepreneurs were probably more conspicuous in Osaka than in Tokyo, the intellectuals, who must gather and digest new ideas for the country, were concentrated in Tokyo. In the ideas poured, at first English empiricism, then darker influences from the Continent: Rousseau, who as always clouded the air; Nietzsche and Hegel, who, by doing their bit for German nationalism, also did their bit for Japanese nationalism; and later Marx, whose message did not really strike home until after the Russian Revolution, but who is today the young person's guide to economics.

One may occasionally wonder whom the intellectual leaders were leading. The Government went its own way, caring for but one idea, the divinity of the Emperor. If Hegel found a warmer welcome than most of the barbarians, it was because he could be accommodated rather successfully to what the Government had in mind. The new intellectuals did much that was ridiculous, moreover, and in their rush to learn they set a standard of superficiality that prevails even today. They found the West at a time when its artistic standards were not in every way of the highest, and they failed to discriminate between what was good in the West and what was probably far better in Japan (the theatre, for instance). When they started to react away from the West, as inevitably many of them did, they could be equally immoderate. The silly cliché about the spiritual Orient and the materialistic Occident is a part of the legacy they have left us as a result.

That they were brave and energetic and filled with a missionary zeal, however, is impossible to deny. Japan might be very spiritual—Japan *was* very spiritual—but circumstances had shown that something was lacking, and it was up to them to discover what. Followers of Locke, Hegel, the Presbyterian missionaries, and the Black Dragon Society were alike in their determination to save the country. Without meaning to imply that superficial ideas somehow become admirable when held with boyish enthusiasm, we might not be too far from the point in suggesting that again it was the manner that was important. A distinction between the content of the intellectual baggage and the energy with which it was shouldered does in any case reveal a curious incongruity.

The tired, inert young man who is the intellectual in Meiji fiction, the intellectual's portrait of himself, seems to bear no resemblance to the young man we actually see piling up new ideas. In the novels, all is darkness and bewilderment, and young persons groping and straining and dutifully cracking to bits. How then to explain the way they did scribble, most of them? Whether it was the enlightenment they were writing of in thirty volumes, or the "Japanese spirit," their energy belied their claims to nervous exhaustion. One feels that they must have gone well with the city they swarmed in upon—a city confused, cluttered, only superficially modern, never quite sure (to this day) whether its populace should walk or be provided with enough street-cars, but through it all buoyant.

Today the intellectuals really do seem tired. The face shown the world has at length come to coincide with the self-portrait. The incon-

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gruity has moved on a step, however. It remains to puzzle us when we look at the city. Tokyo is supposed to be intensely depressing. In novels with titles like *Streets without Sunlight*, we learn that it is a city of wanderers in a world that will not have them. Perhaps to some extent it is. Certainly the suburbs that extend endlessly to the west are very dreary. There live the intellectuals, and there Communists are elected to the ward councils, evidence no doubt of rootlessness.

But if anything is true of the teeming flats to the north and east, it is that they are *not* cold and dark. Life there is far from idyllic, of course. There are gangsters and dope peddlers, and hardly anyone has a room of his own; but if one were to walk across the city from west to east with an instrument sensitive to such things, one would with very little doubt find a steady rise in good spirits. The delivery boys and the barmaids probably wish they had lots of money, but they do not have the look of people who are tired of life or who want to be someone else. The contrast with the sluggishness of Manila or the surliness of Hong Kong cannot be overlooked.

It is a city of the young, who persist in being hopeful ("having a dream," the Japanese put it) when everyone tells them to despair. They leave school and set up busi-

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nesses of their own, and in an over-cartelised country that means being almost recklessly hopeful. Tokyo has acquired half a million people per year since the war, and today the Tokyo-Yokohama area and the far north are the only parts of the country where men outnumber women. These statistics, given life, mean that young people are pouring into the city. The newspapers love to carry stories of vanished hopes, but again one feels that it simply is not so. Either the young men and women on the Ginza and in Asakusa are consummately gifted actors, or they like what they are doing. If they are to be criticised for anything, it is for enjoying themselves too much. "Oh, go out and build a bridge somewhere," you occasionally want to say to the young man with the guitar.

THE NOVELIST Tanizaki, who hated the old city and was pleased to see it disappear in 1923, has written of his plans for the reconstructed city:

"Well-ordered streets, and gleaming new pavement, and a flood of automobiles, and block towering upon block in beautiful geometric patterns, and elevated railways weaving their way beneath, and subways and streetcars, and the stir of a great, nightless city, and pleasure facilities rivalling those of New York and Paris. The people of Tokyo would live in the Western manner, and the young, both men and women, would wear Western clothes.... Views of the reconstructed city passed numberless across my mind, like flashes in a movie. Evening gowns and tails and tuxedoes, and champagne glasses floating by like the moon upon the sea. The after-theatre crowds late at night, with the beams of countless headlights crossing and clashing on the darkly shining streets. Vaudeville, a swirl of satin and gossamer and legs and artificial lights. The seductive calls of street-walkers, cutting in and out of the lights of the Ginza and Asakusa and Marunouchi and Hibiya. The secret pleasures of Turkish baths and beauty parlours. Grotesque crimes."

There are many Japanese who will say that Tanizaki's dream—in fact he wrote about it much later only to ridicule it—has come true. To them, Tokyo has taken the place of Shanghai as the gaudy pleasure centre of the Far East. It is an enormous cancer, strangling the rest of the country. Even Yokohoma, only a few miles away, has the look of a ghost town. The country's foreign exchange goes to buy automobiles for Tokyo, the honest labourers of the nation must build more hydro-electric dams so that Tokyo can have more neon lights.

In Shinjuku and Shibuya, which prosper as transportation centres for the western suburbs, the number of movie theatres almost doubled in the single year 1956. The jam of foreign automobiles is indeed evidence that the Government, mad about free enterprise, has exercised less control than it might have over foreign-exchange reserves. There are too many restaurants, too many bars, too many television towers, too many baseball stadia, too many well-groomed young ladies whose source of income is doubtful, too many thoroughbred dogs.

Still, it is hard to think of Tokyo as merely a city of pleasure. Cities of pleasure ought to stay open all night. Tokyo closes tight by midnight, so that the dancing girls and bartenders can catch the last train home. The public transportation system has little sympathy for people out debauching. It is for people who work. On both the downtown loop line and the line to the western suburbs, there are no trains between one and four in the morning, and there are more trains between five and six in the morning than there are between eleven and twelve at night. Even in the grosser pleasures, one notes a certain restraint that makes it hard to think of the city as abandoned to sin. There is an enormous amount of drinking, and an enormous amount of vomiting on public vehicles, for the Japanese cannot hold their liquor; and yet drunkenness is not a social problem. Alcoholics are comparatively rare. There are erotic shows which the touts call "French"; but one does not have to see many to note that they are carefully ritualised, as though by following the rules the performers managed to preserve their dignity. There is

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little doubt that the police could stop the erotic shows, but have concluded, with much justice, that they do not matter. Now and then, for the record, a few performers are taken at random and fined; but I have an acquaintance who once stopped at a police box to ask where he might find a "French" movie, and was obliged with fairly exact directions.

IT IS often said that Tokyo is not a city at all, but an overgrown village. In a sense, not necessarily derogatory, this is true. Possibly because most of it is so ramshackle, as though put up for only a summer, there is a feeling in even the most crowded parts of the city that the rice paddies are not far away. In Nagai Kafû's best Tokyo novels, the dirt and waste of the city are described with a farmer's eye for the passing seasons, and the great annual festivals follow the rhythm of the farms. Even in Asakusa the buses must stop while the portable shrine for the spring festival weaves its way down the street—at first sight to avoid the oil smears, actually for no better reason than that shrines have always been carried thus. The elders complain that the young have gone flabby and do not give the god the bouncing he has every right to expect; but probably they were making the same complaint a hundred years ago when the feckless *waka danna* overslept on festival day.

There is nothing surprising in the discovery that modern celebrations with a strongly secular tinge (the stimulus today is not awe but drink) were once fertility rites. So, we are told, was the Maypole dance. Still the matter seems rather special when one looks at Tokyo. The urban populace has not been cut off from the farms as in most Western cities. It is second and third sons who go to the city or surplus daughters who are sent off to be maids or courtesans. Whole villages have not been uprooted, as in 19th-century England. This is not of course to say that everyone has a farm to go home to in hard times; but sanctions of a very ancient order do nonetheless seem to operate to keep the city under control, or at least its poorer districts. The largest Communist strongholds are not in the industrial slums but in the white collar suburbs. Japanese labourers *ought* to be revolutionaries, just as tenant farmers ought to be, and a massive peasant conservatism seems to explain the fact that they are not.

Some forty years ago Thorstein Veblen described what he called "the opportunity of Japan." For a time, he said, an industrial state would be able to make use of feudal loyalty patterns; but only for a time. Industrialisation would inevitably destroy those patterns. He may have been right. The authority of the family head, on which the whole structure was based, is no longer what it once was, and there is much talk of juvenile delinquency, not to be dismissed even though much of it seems alarmist. When and if the last of the old sanctions go, there is no telling what will happen. Today they are no longer strong enough to send young men off dying for the Emperor, but they are still strong enough to preserve the essential steadiness of what may on the surface seem like a mad, jangling city. The jangle is over by midnight. By eight o'clock in the morning, even if it is Sunday, not one person in a hundred is still in bed.

I for one would not be sorry to see the gaudier entertainments go. It would still be the same city without them, and the righteous would have less to frown about. It would still be a great stew of people even if they all lived in tents, and it would go on living with added intensity the split, contradictory life of the country. Tokyo has not really changed much from the years before the pastel-and-glass buildings began to go up. The Tsukiji Fish Market was very nearly the best show in town then, and it is very nearly the best show in town now. Noisy, undecorated, wholly unperfumed, quarrelsome in a genial way, the Tsukiji Fish Market might in fact be the answer to the nagging question of where to take the recent arrival. The only trouble is that you have to be there by six o'clock in the morning.

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Michael Polanyi

The Foolishness of History

November, 1917—November, 1957

IT IS often said that our scientific approach to history debars us from discriminating between good and evil; but the real trouble is not that this method blinds us to crime (which we still continue to recognise in spite of our sophistication) but that it renders us incapable of envisaging folly. And yet it is folly that has made *our* history; follies so vast that they appear almost inexplicable the moment they are recognised as such. Many of these follies are still so widespread, so nobly popular, and so ingrained in our own habits of mind, that their recognition remains difficult, wavering, incomplete. Remember how twenty years ago practically everyone in Britain believed firmly the slogan of "poverty in the midst of plenty?" It was regarded as axiomatic that opulence was at hand for the mere asking. And not only in Britain, but everywhere—in Italy and Greece, in Turkey and Ceylon, in Borneo and the Gran Chaco. Just like that. The Children's Crusades delivering boatloads of boys and girls into the hands of oriental slave-dealers were perhaps less reckless than the enterprises undertaken by modern political movements on the grounds of our latter-day delusions; for now the fate of the entire human race is at stake.

Volume upon volume of excellent scholarship is rapidly accumulating on the history of the Russian Revolution, but as I read these books I find my own recollection of this event dissolving bit by bit. In these carefully researched accounts, we see people being driven by conflicting conceptions of reality; but each of these conceptions appears quite reasonable in its own way. So when two sides clash, we merely see the stronger eliminating the weaker; and nothing is left behind. The Revolution is about to be quietly enshrined under a pyramid of monographs.

Yet I know that it was something quite different. Not only when it actually happened; but all along, up to this day—for it still lives in our own blood. It was boundless; it was infinitely potent; it was an act of madness. A great number of men—led by one man possessing genius—set themselves limitless aims that had no bearing at all on reality. They detested everything in existence and were convinced therefore that the total destruction of existing society and the establishment of their own absolute power on its ruins would bring total happiness to humanity. That was—unbelievable as it may seem—*literally* the whole substance of their projects for a new economic, political, and social system of mankind.

TO-DAY, if you are resolved to flout the obvious requirements of common sense and decide to plunge the world into obscurantism, you naturally invoke the justification of science. This is what the famous transformation of socialism from an Utopia to a Science amounted to. Scientific socialism banned as

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"unscientific" any enquiry into, or even speculation about, the nature of socialism. Its success was complete, the darkness remained unbroken. During all the decades preceding the Russian Revolution, decades in which Marxist socialism became an intellectual world movement, only a few obscure scraps were published on the nature and functioning of socialism.

This is how it happened that two small pages of Marx became the fundamental text for Lenin's economic principles. Lenin discovered them in a paper now known as the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which Marx wrote in 1875 for the information of five leaders of the German Socialist Party. A copy of this was found fifteen years later among Marx's papers and was published by Engels in the *Neue Zeit*. Lenin read this article at the beginning of 1917 and wrote down in his notes:

"Thus here two phases of communist society are clearly, precisely, and exactly distinguished. The *lower* (the 'first')—distribution of articles of consumption 'proportionately' to the quantity of labour contributed by each to society. The *'higher'*—from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Six months later Lenin triumphantly quoted from these pages in *The State and Revolution*, to refute writers who doubted that Socialism could succeed in abolishing inequality. This objection, Lenin replied, flourishing his new-found text, "only proves the extreme ignorance of Messieurs the bourgeois ideologists."

Nor is the level of his argument substantially raised as he proceeds to formulate the immediate aims thus set to Communism. Let me repeat a few lines of his statement, even though the place is well known. This is how, according to Lenin, the economic system will work:

"The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of socially necessary labour, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done such and such an amount of work. And with this certificate, he draws from the social stock of means of consumption, a corresponding quantity of product."

Not a word about the method of distributing labour, of supplying raw materials, of securing even the most elementary economic rationality. We are left to guess the answers to such problems from the sentence

"The whole of society will become a single office and a single factory with equality of labour and equality of pay."

The quality of thought behind this announcement can be gauged from two further paragraphs which form the emphatic conclusion of the chapter.

"For when *all* have learned to administer, and actually do administer social production independently, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers, and similar 'guardians of capitalist traditions,' the escape from this national accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that very soon the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse will become a *habit*.

And then the door will be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state."

These words were written exactly forty years ago. The movement which followed their lead has since caused (directly or indirectly) the death through famine, persecution, or war, of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty million people, depending on how you count them. Do we at last see plainly to-day that they mean precisely nothing? I wonder.

THERE was one writer who clearly realised that these rhetorical pronouncements were utterly nonsensical and saw what they must amount to in practice. This writer was Ludwig von Mises. In a paper published in 1920 he observed that economic management is impossible unless you can ascribe a rational price to every unit of resources and labour on the one hand, and to every parcel of products on the other hand. Mises concluded from this fact that you *cannot* run an

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economic system as a single enterprise. The only way to conduct industrial life was to parcel out resources between a large number of firms, each of which will make the most profitable use of its lot for the purpose of supplying a single common market.

This may, of course, sound strange. If you have all the pieces of a whole within your power, why not consider them jointly and combine them to that grand whole? Why divide them instead into thousands of separate lots and place the operation of each one in charge of a manager who knows nothing of all the others; or, at least, knows no more of these than is remotely noticeable by the repercussions which their operations may have on the market?

Why, indeed? I suppose the only people who know indisputably from their own experience why you cannot direct all the resources of an industrial system from one centre, are those who have tried it. The only full-scale attempt to do this was the one undertaken in Soviet Russia during the last six or eight months of 1920; and the results were disastrous. By December 1920 even Trotsky, who had been a most rigorous central planner, began to feel uneasy about the assumptions underlying this policy. He replied to a delegation complaining of the mounting economic hardships:

> "All this is easily said, but even in a small farm of 500 *desjatines*, in which there are various agricultural branches represented, it is necessary to preserve certain proportions; to regulate our vast, far-flung, disorganised economic life so that the various boards should maintain the necessary cross-connections and feed each other, so to speak—for example when it is necessary to build workers' houses, one board should give so many nails as the other gives planks and the third building materials—to achieve such proportionality, such internal correspondence, that is a difficult task which the Soviet power has yet to achieve."

And ten years later Trotsky, in exile, had been sobered to the point of declaring that only a Universal Mind as conceived by Laplace could successfully conduct a centrally-directed economy. Ludwig von Mises had been proved right.

Yes, I believe the rulers of the Soviet Union know, better than anyone else, the impossibility of genuine central planning: they know it in their bones, but their lips are sealed. The project of a centrally-directed industrial system died in March 1921, and the system of commercial state capitalism was promptly invented to replace it. But the dead ideology of socialism was not buried. Far from it. When the great Soliman was killed during the siege of Szigetvár, the Turks concealed his death and paraded a dummy in the dead Sultan's garments until victory was secured; and the Communists acted similarly when their first, truly socialist, system collapsed. The Five Year Plans with all their sound and fury are but the parading of a dummy dressed up in the likeness of the original purpose of socialism.

To be sure, the sound and fury have not been altogether empty. A government posturing as the planner of every economic transaction in the country will do as much as any government can, and often quite a bit more, to impress its performances on its own people and on the world at large. By setting up large plants, which have their own inherent operational logic and the technology of which has been developed in a market economy abroad, it will establish areas of reasonable economic relations and thus cover the country widely with patches of technically-fixed economic rationality. The easiest choice, unfortunately, will be to embark on a huge armaments programme, simply because modern armament manufacture was originally developed under governmental management and has remained therefore technically suitable to be conducted by a government. The senseless concentration on heavy industry is also due to the fact that such production lends itself more easily to centralisation: one can set "targets" and mobilise the nation's energies and resources to reach them—whether or not these "targets" have any organic connection with the rest of the economy. Much was done in this way that was useful, and the prestige and power of a revolutionary government were always available to curb any resistance to its policies. The

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devastations accompanying such achievements only added to their potency as a ritual—a ritual celebrating the splendours of long-dead socialist aspirations.

The system often broke down exactly in the way Trotsky described it in the speech I quoted; even the Soviet textbook mentions such examples: "If the production of a certain number of motor cars is planned but the production of the requisite quantity of steel sheets is not planned, this may cause the plan for the production of motor cars to remain unfulfilled." But under cover of the noise made by the Five Year Plans the Government went on quietly fitting into place one piece of commercial (i.e., "capitalist") economic machinery after another. Bit by bit every economic operation was fully commercialised. Adam Smith would have marvelled at this strange return of the "invisible hand," doubly invisible as the carefully camouflaged secret of "socialist" successes. Nothing could indeed be funnier than the way this kind of economics is taught in the Soviet Union. The official textbook is in two parts, nicknamed by Soviet students the Old and New Testament. The "Old Testament" tells you all about the evils of commercialism, of production for profit, of the fetishism of commodities, of social relations being degraded to relations between goods, of the alienation of man within an acquisitive economy producing for the market. In the "New Testament" each of these commercial features is re-introduced, with each time renewed apologies, explaining that under socialism they are really and essentially different from what they were before, and that besides they are only temporary, etc., etc.

WHEN you read these justifications carefully, you see that they coincide exactly with the thesis of Ludwig von Mises: it is impossible to organise a nation's production centrally; one has to rely instead on the commercial operations of numerous independent enterprises. Whether these are privately owned or state owned turns out to make not as much difference as one might think. The managers and executives run the enterprise in pretty much the same way and always for the same purpose: a profit on their books.

But unfortunately, Professor von Mises had claimed too much. He had not foreseen that a system of *nationalised* enterprises could be run on commercial lines. He denied this. So he and his followers now changed their grounds. In 1947 Mises denounced the Soviet Government for wickedly doing precisely that which in 1920 he had proved to be impossible. He wrote:

> "Men must choose between the market economy and socialism. The state can preserve the market economy... or it can itself control the conduct of all production activities. If it is not the consumers by means of demand and supply on the market, it must be the government by compulsion."

This became the line of the post-war anti-socialist movement. It was the argument of *The Road to Serfdom* published by Hayek in 1944.

Of all the intellectual triumphs of the Communist régime—and they are vast—it seems to me the greatest is to have made these eminent and influential writers so completely lose their heads. Could anything please that régime better than to hear itself proclaimed by its leading opponents as an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent socialist planner? That is precisely the picture of itself which the régime was so desperately struggling to keep up. Such accusations supply the Soviet government with an incontestable 'testimony' of having achieved the impossible aspirations of socialism, when in fact it has simply set up a system of state capitalism—a goal which leaves the régime next door to where it started.

WE HAVE forgotten what the Russian Revolution was about: that it set out to establish a money-less industrial system, free from the chaotic and sordid automatism of the market and directed instead scientifically by one single comprehensive plan. This was to be the lower stage of "Communism," on which the higher stage would follow.

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These have remained up to this day the supreme ideological purposes of the Communist régime, and the source of its emotional power. Hence its perpetual state of turmoil. The fantastic demands of its ideology must struggle unceasingly against the limitations of reality. The administrative apparatus must be constantly stretched to the breaking point in the attempt to achieve a task which exceeds many millionfold the span of control of *any* administrative machinery. And the mountainous hierarchy created for this absurd purpose lives by this 'function' it has assigned itself and holds on to power grimly in its name.

To-day, when our only hope for the future lies in conquering the minds of our opponents, we must concentrate on this crucial truth. We are faced with the force of moral passions, armed with weapons of mass destruction, but this fearful combination hinges simply on a false conception of administrative possibilities; and this very point may therefore be susceptible to persuasion by argument.

So foolish is history.

Womanisers

ADULTERERS and customers of whores
And cunning takers of virginities
Caper from bed to bed, but not because
The flesh is pricked to infidelities.

The body is content with homely fare;
It is the avid, curious mind that craves
New pungent sauce and strips the larder bare,
The palate and not hunger that enslaves.

Don Juan never was a sensualist:
Scheming fresh triumphs, artful, wary, tense,
He took no pleasure in the breasts he kissed
But gorged his ravenous mind and starved each sense.

An itching, tainted intellectual pride
Goads the salt lecher till he has to know
Whether all women's eyes grow bright and wide,
All wives and whores and virgins shudder so.

Hunters of women burn to show their skill,
Yet when the panting quarry has been caught
Mere force of habit drives them to the kill:
The soft flesh is less savoury than their sport.

John Press

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Martin Seymour-Smith

Zero and the Impossible

Roy Campbell; Wyndham Lewis; Joyce Cary; John Middleton Murry

FORTUNATELY it is seldom that four such distinguished literary personalities as Roy Campbell, Wyndham Lewis, Joyce Cary and John Middleton Murry die within a few weeks of one another, and it is excusably topical to consider them together in a single article. But have they anything in common other than this sad coincidence? Apart from an affinity between the psychologically obtuse aggressiveness which characterises much of Campbell's verse, and the least satisfactory features of Lewis' satire, there are perhaps fewer resemblances between their actual works than between almost any other arbitrary combination of four contemporaries that might be thought up. In spite of this, however, they did share a common concern to solve the problem without which no creative writer could exist, or want to exist: the problem of creating a poetic idiom, of finding a language in which it is possible to communicate an apprehension of reality. Paradoxically, Campbell, the poet, had the least success in doing this, while Lewis, whose anti-sensuous and a-rhythmical prose might have been deliberately contrived as an attempt to avoid poetic form, came nearest to it.

When we think of poetry we think of it as being written in verse; and it is important to maintain the distinction between *poetry* itself (this would apply to even a single line of verse which happens to be poetic) and *the poetic,* which may be observed in either the theme or the exposition of all creative prose, but never simultaneously in both. Crudely speaking, we think of a poem not only as saying something true but also as saying it in the 'right' way; it has an inevitability which we do not expect from prose. In prose we can accept the statement 'love is important to human beings' if it is supported by other convincing statements of the same type. But we demand from a poem that this statement should possess a linguistic originality beyond that of mere diction or verbal inventiveness; such originality comprises a description of an experience of the 'truth,' of which the prose statement can only be a generalisation, so exact that it is immediately communicable. Such prose devices as metaphor and 'symbolism' represent its necessary striving towards a poetic, that is, ultimately, a verse form. Rhythm, and sometimes rhyme, often thought of as 'devices' of poetry, are in fact the natural consequences of attempts to record private experience in public, or at any rate communicable, terms. Even the best fiction is only significant lying. But poetry, although it appears to be built upon metaphor, 'symbolism,' or some other prose-system, and to require an even greater degree of 'willing suspension of disbelief'

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than prose, is based upon the true nature of language: upon the possibility of recording solipsist experience in communicable terms. Poetic statements are nearer to reality itself than those 'useful' assertions which appear to be purely factual, but which logical analysis rightly shows are not necessarily true. But while logical analysis performs the useful function of demonstrating the unverifiability, or plain wrongness, of almost everything we say or take for granted, it is significant that each of its attempts to construct a series of 'verifiable' statements is characterised by the essentially trivial nature of the sense which these statements actually contain. And that is what we should expect: the logician's world must consist only of what cannot matter. The 'language' now in process of being built up by certain philosophers is 'true'; but it is based upon the principle of non-experience, and is thus a gormless complement of poetic language. Useful as their work has been, that is what logicians are up to in the terms of the subjectivity they deny. Between their unhuman limbo and the poetic language of reality, we live. Neither the logician's denial of love nor the total solipsism of lunatic rage (whose validity, ironically, no arid sceptic can deny), both equally animal, can help us to live as human beings. Somewhere in this hinterland the scale of creativity begins; its linguistic culmination is poetry.

It is important to realise the human consequences of the only kind of 'truth' which logical analysis can allow, not only because of its psychologically unnatural intellectualism, but also because it seems to be the only peaceful alternative to the more difficult, but richer truth of poetry: if, because it cuts out the notion of subjectivity, it is non-creative (and most would agree that this is so), then it follows that creativity is vital to the preservation of whatever goodness is inherent in human emotion—is necessary to the survival of the quality we generalise into the term 'love'. We find the poetic, if not poetry, in all creative writing; and in one sense, although it is a severe one, we may assess all prose by its distance from poetry. This might seem to imply that a 'direct' story-teller such as Hardy, in his capacity as a novelist, is less poetic than, to take the obvious example, the James Joyce of *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake:* but in fact Hardy's novels are much more poetic because they do not represent consciously ambitious attempts, as Joyce's do, to make prose do a job of which only poetry is capable. Almost every 'serious' prose writer, from Priestley, through Graham Greene's *Bubbling April,* to Hemingway, has tried to write poetry.

I

Of these four writers, Roy Campbell, 'Rob MacPhail' of Wyndham Lewis' *Snooty Baronet* (1932), 'the poet from the Veldt,' 'one of the few authentic poets now writing in English,' was undoubtedly the least in talent and importance. McPhail is a monster-prototype, a symbol of the worst in Lewis; a character of whose poetic genius we are never convinced, who is killed in the bull-ring after a grotesque and comical scene in which, while the bulls look on, the *toreros* fight each other.

Roy Campbell began well enough: in vigorous and effective protest against the social and political set up of his native South-Africa in the early 1920s. It was then that he wrote his best poems, such as *Buffel's Kop (Olive Schreiner's Grave):*

In after times when strength or courage fail,
May I recall this lonely hour: the gloom
Moving one way, all heaven in the pale
Roaring: and high above the insulted tomb
An eagle anchored on full spread of sail
That from its wings let fall a silver plume.

But Campbell himself soon became infected with the very narcissism and lack of self-perception which he had begun by tilting at. His method in verse became a concentration of his method in prose: all he dislikes is identified, willy-nilly, with what it seems early to have become generalised into: a negative and inchoate account, based on a

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school-boyish orientation towards a rough impression of the classical spirit of French Catholicism, of the enemies of 'freedom,' 'humanity,' and so on—slogan-words which have no place in poetry. T. E. Lawrence wrote of him, in a letter to Laura Riding, "Roy Campbell . . . is sick, not strong." He had much in common with the novelist and playwright Henry de Montherlant, although he never possessed the stylistic genius or dramatic ability of the French writer. Like de Montherlant, Campbell was a member of the Roman Catholic Church (he became converted at the age of 36), and he sought to reconcile the spiritual truth of Catholicism with both a love of the naked body and with sport; both tried, without any marked success, to be bull-fighters; and both gravitated towards Fascist and authoritarian forms of government.

Campbell's poetic career is worth discussing because it affords an illustration of the consequences of allowing a rhetorical and descriptive energy, such as he possessed, to remain unattached. His work, despite its unsubtle ding-dong rhythms, never lacked force; but the power and depth went out of it early. It is instructive to compare his last long ambitious poem, *Orpheus,* a coarse, long-winded, and monotonous hymn of self-praise, with his early, shorter *Tristan da Cunha,* in which he is able not only to be truthful about himself, but also to assess the poetic value of his future achievement:

Exiled like you and severed from my race
By the cold ocean of my own disdain,
Did I not freeze in such a wintry space,
Did I not travel through a storm as vast
And rise at times, victorious from the main,
To fly the sunrise at my shattered mast.
. . . . . .
You fish with nets of seaweed in the deep
As fruitlessly as I with nets of rhyme—
Yet forth you stride, yourself the way, the goal,
The surges are your strides, your path is time.

In conclusion, he bids farewell to his poetic self, and in doing so gives his only genuinely moving description of his human self:

We shall not meet again; over the wave
Our ways divide . . . . . .
. . . . . .
I battle like a rock, aloof and friendless,
Are not their generations vague and endless
The waves, the strides, the feet on which I go?

After 1930 he wrote little that does not justify the poetically authentic despair of *Tristan da Cunha,* although he seems temporarily to have rediscovered his old self in his translations from St. John of the Cross —which he claimed, characteristically, had been directly inspired by God in a vision. These read like his own verse, but with something added—perhaps because of his delusion that, in writing them he was obeying a Divine Command. His Lorca translations, on the other hand, represent him at his worst. Although they are reasonably accurate, they distort the essential spirit of their originals, replacing it with his own. The result is something like a series of poems by W. E. Henley, in his *Invicta* mood, on a Spanish tour. (Campbell used to claim that he had been Lorca's friend, but there is no evidence to support this, and it seems unlikely. And in his last book, *Portugal,* he quotes Borges' remark to a visiting Englishman in Buenos Aires in 1947, "But surely Campbell is a much *better* poet than Lorca!")

Had Campbell not been personally involved in fighting men whom he believed (although erroneously) to be 'Reds,' one and all, in the Spanish Civil War, it is hard to see what his authoritarian spirit could have disliked about Marxist totalitarianism as opposed to Franco's Catholic Fascist form of it. He drank in the Nationalist propaganda as eagerly as the rest of totalitarian Europe, and had never thought about the real nature of communism. By poetic standards, his self-celebration, in verse itself, of the schoolboy-adventurer, with his unambiguous political attachments—an obvious confusion of elementary romantic fantasy

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with, we must suppose, something factual in his own mind—was not merely anti-poetic: for the desire to compensate a sense of inferiority by boasting is one of the essential characteristics of the men who make up all authoritarian governments, whether Fascist or Communist. A feeling of inadequacy which might once have been pitied can become a compensation big enough to start a reign of terror. And here we see it as the theme of a poet! It is a clear indication of the nature of the flaw in Lewis, one of the most profound and subtle thinkers of our time, that he could admire this man as an 'authentic poet.'

The failure of nearly all of the poets of the '30s to distinguish between human suffering and the crude manifestations of politics was serious enough; but Campbell's positive and righteous identification of himself with an oppressive ideology is on an altogether different level. *The Fight,* a description of an air-battle between a 'Red,' and 'an unknown pilot' (a Nationalist) represents the final negation of *Tristan da Cunha:*

> *. . . if I held my breath*
> *It was because my youth was in the Red*

he wrote; and then, after a description of the victory of the Fascist plane:

> *The towers and trees were lifted hymns of praise*
> . . . . . .
> *The noonday azure strumming all its rays*
> *Sang that a famous battle had been won*
> . . . . . .
> *The Solar Christ and captain of my days*
> *Zoomed to the zenith; and his will was done.*

This capacity for using the destructive manifestations of war as a symbol for a private conviction provides a revealing contrast with the uneasiness of Auden's "the necessary lie" in his long poem *Spain.*

Many speak warmly of Campbell's generosity as a boon-companion; and this existed. But should we allow ourselves to be deterred from pointing out his failure to fulfil his potentialities as a poet on the strength of a few beers? Those who do admire his work, it will be noticed, seem unable to defend him without falling back upon such non-critical utterances as that of Mr. Aldington, on his death: "I loved the lovely bully." The moral of his poetic failure is that his use of verse became increasingly non-poetic. The attitudes it expresses, because of their origin in an unexamined—in fact, a praised—self-love, are an effective contribution to that universal practice of rejection of the truth which is ensuring that humanity, as some understand the word, shall not survive.

II

Mr. T. S. Eliot has rightly called Wyndham Lewis one of the most fascinating personalities of our time. I wonder if what has fascinated him, for he does not miss much, is the manner in which a contempt for humanity so cynical as Lewis' could have evolved. He was gifted with artistic genius, an intelligence of uncanny power, and creative imagination. There is nothing since Swift quite as effectively ferocious as Lewis' satire; of his non-fiction, at least *The Lion and the Fox* and *Time and Western Man* are indispensable for an understanding of what has been significant in the thought of our time; of his novels, at least *Tarr, The Revenge for Love, The Vulgar Streak,* and *Self-Condemned* are 20th-century classics. No writer of comparable power has had so keen or full an awareness of what he was doing or of the effect it would have upon his audience; no creative writer—of any time, I am tempted to say—has recorded so negative a vision so deliberately; few men, I think, have ended with such courage, in such despair. The achievement for which he paid so high a personal price was to prove that the disembodied ego, even when informed with an intelligence as shrewd as his, cannot survive alone; to demonstrate that an existence consciously based upon the external reality of human history—the confused chaos of misunderstanding and war—can only end, when

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madness does not supervene, in self-condemnation and despair. Even his most perceptive critic, Mr. Hugh Kenner, assumes the integrity of Lewis' political thought, and does not effectually penetrate the deliberate cynicism with which it disguises its private theme as a public concern with the welfare of mankind.

It is difficult, indeed, to abandon a belief in Lewis' sincerity, for this is aroused by the creative legitimacy of his prose style. But from the beginning, when he published his first story, *The Pole*, in Ford's *English Review* in 1909, his theme was the essentially dissociative nature of human personality. He planned an historically successful career upon what his creative intelligence had revealed to him; determined to exploit his enemy, Time—'what gets into history'—with the instruments of poetry. "The artist," he once wrote, "is relieved of the necessity of the practical man to lie." And although he knew this would be interpreted as a devotion to the truth, what he really meant by it was that 'the artist'—Lewis—was literally 'relieved' of mankind's pretence of respecting truth, since he knew that it was a pretence.... The conviction inherent in this choice is far worse than, say, the Hobbesian formula for survival, because it means that there is nothing worth preserving at all: consistency or love are delusions, not worth our despair. Lewis, in his attempt to isolate his intellect from 'the herd', rejected the gift which had given him the ability to make that choice in the first place. Yet he found no peace: for this was to reject, within himself, all that is good in human nature. Thus, Mr. Zagreus, one of his alter egos in *The Apes of God*, seeing many "gaping life-like garments", "battered them out of human shape as far as he could". The ferocity of his satire, culminating in the hell of *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* (*The Human Age*, Parts II and III, 1955), is prompted, not by Swift's hatred of cruelty, or even of *les autres*, but by self-contempt, by the inescapable knowledge of his own deliberate inhumanity. Lewis' despair was that while his impulse was to destroy the 'human shape' of his conviction of the inevitably schizoid nature of personality, he knew also that this lay at the heart of madness; that his intelligence originated in a humane and poetic need for hope.

His career may be divided into three main phases and an interlude of exile and silence, allowing for some overlapping and a few anticipations and regressions. The first was that in which his purpose had not fully emerged into consciousness, and in which, therefore, it is least disguised (*The Pole*, 1909, to *The Art of Being Ruled*, 1926). Then came the desolating years of exploration of the practical possibilities of that purpose (*The Lion and the Fox*, 1927, to *The Hitler Cult and How it Will End*, 1939). This was followed by a period of exile in Canada and America, the psychological reasons for which we may infer from the remarkable novel which began it, *The Vulgar Streak* (1941); apart from one or two unimportant and retrogressive books, this period of 'creative silence' remained effectually unbroken until Lewis' announcement of his blindness in *The Listener* (*The Sea Mists of the Northern Winter*, 1951). The final phase was devoted to a description, more or less oblique—at its most direct in *Self-Condemned*—of the consequences of his choice: an authentic account of despair.

In the prose of the first and least conscious period of his activity the polarity of meaning and expression is absolute: the gift of poetic insight flounders helplessly in its natural resistance to the theme of power; explodes itself into the meaningless and eloquent *minutiae* which constitute what most of his readers regard as his stylistic crypticism. This culminated in *The Childermass* (1928), the final sustained effort of his creativity to resist engulfment in the ideological waste-land of *The Art of Being Ruled*. The next nine years he spent relentlessly trying to discover a workable formula for living based upon his rejection of the possibility of developing a coherent personality—which had by then become a conviction of its inevitable disparateness. The enthusiasm of *Hitler* (1931) is cynically in proportion to Hitler's practical chances of success at that time; the hostility

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of *The Hitler Cult* (1939), a reflection of Lewis' discernment of the Nazis' certain failure. "If *power* is what interests you, when the wind changes you change too," he wrote in 1952. The sub-title of the later book on Hitler, "And How it Will End," was not accidental: he knew.

He preserved his day-to-day self from that disintegration into its disparate elements which constitutes madness only by the constant exercise of his graphic faculties: impersonality is the chief feature of his art, and especially of the portraits he executed in the 'thirties. This explains his positive attitude to 'the eye', and the extent to which ideologies based upon its innate superiority to the rest of the 'gutbag' dominate his prose. The portraitist, whose function was to reduce human subjects to formal abstractions, was the only aspect of himself which he allowed to be known to anyone for more than a few hours; but as the portraitist, he was in command.

The Vulgar Streak (1941) was Lewis' first approach to a truly 'organic' form. The hero, Vincent Penhale (Hanp Lenten* Vice), is still a contrived character, but he nevertheless resembles his creator with a certain psychological autonomy of his own. Penhale has emerged from a slum into luxury by means of a detached and impersonal observation of the cheap tricks by which this may be done. Mr. Kenner writes: "The dénouement comes with the unlucky revelation that he has been supporting his elegance by passing counterfeit money. Governments, it is true, do this all the time... currency is what people can be persuaded to accept". Vincent hangs himself, with a piece of paper attached to his chest, "in the manner of a placard", reading: "Whoever finds this body may do what they like with it. *I* don't want it. *Signed*. Its former inhabitant." *"Signed"* is italicised because Lewis had never put his signature to anything, had despised human 'engagement' as a sentimental delusion. Now he began to realise his failure to understand the relatively simple fact that his 'impersonality,' which he had justified on the grounds of its 'reality,' had been cultivated as an instrument of ambition, had represented a 'demon of progress' whose extremes "end in an insane zero"; for ambition cannot be 'detached.' He had passed false currency, like the rulers whom he had pretended to discuss with impartiality—when his real concern had been to study the mechanics of their rise to power.

THE real theme of Lewis' work was stated as early as 1914, in *The Enemy of the Stars*, a "dream-play," "very well acted by you and me." There are two main protagonists in this work, one of the most original, strange and powerful of our time: Arghol, the hero, the disembodied intellect, the Lewisian ego in its quest for power, and Hanp, who represents the "crowd," "the body," "vastness of humanity:" "you are the world, Brother," says Arghol to Hanp, "with its objections to me."

The conflict between Arghol and his 'Ape,' Hanp, provides the overt theme; it ends with Hanp stabbing Arghol while he is asleep, and then jumping into the canal.

Now, as Mr. Kenner points out in his discussion of *The Enemy of the Stars*, Arghol is named after Algol, the double-star in the constellation of Perseus. He is right, too, in identifying the character Arghol with the brighter of the two components, fated "to waltz eternally about a common centre of gravity with this unluminous companion, which eclipses his light with clockwork periodicity and transforms the effulgence of his genius into a recurrent demoniacal wink." This is penetrating, but does not go far enough. *The Enemy of the Stars* could still be read, on Mr. Kenner's interpretation, as an account of the 'Body-Mind Conflict,' the 'Cartesian split'. But it is more: it is a Machiavellian exploitation of human weakness—and Lewis' reissue of it, heavily re-

* 'Lenten' had a significance for Lewis. There is a Lenten party in *The Apes of God* during which is recited a parody of Boileau to the effect that satire is fatal to the creative writer. Mr. Geoffrey Wagner ends his recent uneven study of Lewis (*Wyndham Lewis*. Routledge. 30s.) by quoting these lines.

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vised, in 1932, in the middle of his 'polemical' period, shows that he realised what he had meant.

"Life itself is not important", he wrote in *The Art of Being Ruled*. "Our values make it so." And in an early essay he had said: "The world is in the strictest sense asleep, with rare intervals and spots of awareness". The real point of *The Enemy of The Stars* (and consciously so in the 1932 version) is that Arghol has no intention of struggling with Hanp at all; that is the impression Lewis wants to convey, but is in fact exactly what he wants to avoid.

The Arabs call Algol 'the demon star' (we may recall *The Demon of Progress in the Arts* whose " 'daring' extremes end in an insane zero"); to the Greeks it was a *winking eye* in the snake-haired Medusa's head which Perseus still carried: the *dead* eye which still retains the power to turn men to stone ("it is an immortality which, in the case of the painting, they have to pay for with death. . . ." Lewis wrote of the people he painted in the '30s); the literal meaning of Medusa is 'cunning one.'

Algol is a 'periodic eclipsing variable'; but what Lewis knew, I am certain, is that neither of its components is intrinsically variable: one periodically eclipses the other, causing their combined light to fade. Moreover, this variation is dependent upon the accident that the earth—'the herd'—happens to be in their plane of motion. The deception —a gigantic 'wink'—is that they do not eclipse one another at all: they revolve round a common centre of gravity. The 'death' of either is not real. Their combined magnitude depends upon a cynically periodic variation, which deceives 'the world'. The conscious exercise of such deception is a condition of absolute power: Hanp may seem to be Arghol, or Arghol Hanp: it does not matter, because they are interdependent. "Men have a loathsome deformity called Self", says Arghol at one point, but at another: "anything but yourself is dirt".

Yet Lewis saw the outcome: introducing Arghol into the "bleak circus," "packed with Posterity, silent and expectant", he wrote: *"The red walls of the Universe now shut them in, with this condemned protagonist . . . till the execution is over, the red walls recede, the universe satisfied."*

The author of *The Vulgar Streak* was not unaware of the ironic justice of the fate of blindness which overtook him in 1951: it was an imperishable relic of his belated recognition of the consequences of rejecting love—of *The Revenge for Love*—of 'how it will end'; a permanent confirmation of Penhale's last message, "*I* don't want it"; a *'Signed'* statement that would at last be truly honoured. Only by the mechanism of deception implicit in *The Enemy of the Stars* had he continued to be what he really was, an enemy of the stars, and remained sane. Now the light was gone out. He found himself "gone sane in a madhouse of functional character"; he was forced to a recognition of his human condition—to the task of recording his power-obsessed career. Those carefully separated fragments of his personality had been undergoing an inevitable natural process of mutual attraction: had been drawn unwillingly closer and closer to one another, their hatred for each other—"affliction got through indiscriminate rubbing against their fellows: social excrescence"—increasing as the momentum of this nightmare staged in a spheroid menagerie increased, until its spin dizzied the intelligence of the zoo-keeper into his committal of the crude error of turning into the inferior propagandist who begins to take over in *The Art of Being Ruled*.

Rotating nebulae, at a certain stage in their evolution, must assume a new, lenticular shape, in which the gases forming them begin to flow away into surrounding space. So Lewis was flattened into a 'quivering disc'; the intolerable tensions within him relieved by, almost literally, the escape of the 'gases' of his most negative satire, *The Roaring Queen* (1936), into the surrounding space. He suppressed them in what must have been, as Mr. Kenner well says, "a sickening moment". He had himself become the flat 'formal abstractions' to which he had reduced both other men and his alter egos—his last hero, a clear self-assessment, is called Card.

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René Harding, hero of *Self-Condemned* (1954) is as near as Lewis ever came to a 'rounded' fictional self-portrait. Harding is 'René' both because of Descartes, progenitor of 'the split,' and because of its meaning of 'reborn'. The time is 1940. A Professor of History, René gives up his post to go to Canada: "So Canada is to be my grave. I wish I had chosen for myself a warmer place—or that fate had . . . there is no alternative existence *ici-bas* when you have got where I did; if you leave hold you shoot down like a lump of lead." This René is the Penhale-Lewis of 1940, to whom the sister who has "always been what I love best in the world" calls out as she sees him for the last time (appropriately enough, at Rugby, where Lewis went to school) "René—René—René"—but he hears the words like "the thin whisper in a shell", and it is as "a glacial shell of a man" that he finishes up. The real moral of the novel is what finally reduces him to this shell: the suicide of his wife. He has treated her with intellectual scorn, regarding his physical relationship with her as an irrelevant need, her physical need for him as contemptible. He goes to the mortuary to view her remains, but faints. "As he fell it had been his object to seize the head and carry it away with him. To examine his legal rights had been his last clear act of consciousness". Later, in a state of shock in hospital, 'His impulse to seize and carry off her head was realised in the imagination . . . he . . . pressed the face against his . . . with amazement, and soon with delight . . . felt the warming lips glueing themselves against his . . . Love had brought her to life again. He imagined, in a sort of delirium, this miracle."

After the transformation of his attempt to record the moral anguish of his predicament, in the character of Pullman of *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* (1955), into a depiction of "a puppet worked with deft fingers with a screaming voice underneath" (the phrase is from *Tyro* No. 1, 1921) he arrived at Father Augustine Card of his last novel, *Red Priest* (1956). The motif of his failure to achieve sexual attachment is even clearer here: Mary Chillingham, who marries Card, is his warmest portrayal. Card is a contradiction in terms: a power-obsessed priest, a "fighting-machine" who murders a fellow-priest, with the significant name of Makepeace, of whom he is jealous, and eventually, in an increasing frenzy of aggressive remorse —"I am just as ruined as a man can be. I shall always be treated as a murderer"—is himself killed by Eskimos. Card's degradation does not lie in his marriage to Mary, as Mr. Wagner suggests in his book on Lewis, but in his fury at being unable to get money from her to finance his never very clear plans to dominate the Church, and in his killing of Makepeace. After his death Mary gives birth to another child: "Her naming was more like a branding; she gave him the fearful name of Zero. She could see that he would look like his terrible father; that he was fated to blast his way across space and time".

Thus Lewis ends: self-condemned in the phantasmagoric landscape of *Malign Fiesta,* his knowledge of himself having increased only in exact proportion to his self-destruction; so that now, emerging as Lewis, the man he has split and hidden for more than fifty years, at last, he has breath enough only to name himself as Zero:

"all, renewed assurance,
And confirmation of the old despair."

III

Joyce Cary did not publish his first novel, *Aissa Saved* (1932), until he was forty-four. Born in Londonderry, of a family originally from Devon—his love of England and its traditions became an increasingly dominant theme in his work—Cary began as an art student in Paris, later going up to Oxford. After Oxford he joined a Montenegrin battalion and fought in the Balkan War of 1912–13, but soon left this to work with a British Red Cross unit. In 1913 he joined the Nigerian Political Service, and after serving in the West African campaigns of the First World War, settled down to a period of magisterial and executive duty in a remote

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part of Nigeria. Then, "after ten years of active, thoughtless and various experience in the world", he began "... to ask what it amounted to; to dig up all his foundations, to find out exactly what they were ... and ... slowly and painfully rebuilt them, as far as he could manage the task, as a coherent whole, on which to found a new life and a new mind."* His novels are the record of this attempt.

Mr. Walter Allen, in his useful British Council pamphlet on Cary, emphasises the value of the 'philosophy' which he built up, relating it directly to the English Protestant and Nonconformist tradition. But this is rather confusing, because while much of what Mr. Allen says is true, he fails to deal with the problem of Cary's 'anti-moralistic' outlook, which is contrary to the strong puritanical streak running through English Nonconformism; fails to point out that the absence of this very conflict in Cary is responsible for his comparatively slight achievement.

If we want to go on enjoying his novels, we should be unwise, I think, to judge them by the highest standards, or to make a serious attempt to assess the degree of his creative intelligence. There is no need to regard them as failures: they do not demand serious critical attention. They should be read for what they are: exuberant expressions, always in terms of Cary's own ebullience, of human vitality—of how life goes on, against everything, including its own predisposition to create despair. For Cary, love-of-living was love. The energy of their self-belief in action is what gives his characters life, if not depth. Even at those points where they suffer from remorse or self-criticism (Sara Monday in *Herself Surprised;* Wilcher in *To be a Pilgrim*) Cary makes it clear that neither such moments of self-doubt, nor the possible validity of what has prompted them, really matter. "There is nothing ... dependable," he wrote in 1947, "but the spirit of life itself and its invincible desperation, which, among *the cruelty of circumstance that is the form and effect of its real being,* begets itself for ever in ... eternal delight." (My italics).*

This, of course, is how people do go on—on the surface. They have 'conflicts,' such as Sara's belief, in *Herself Surprised*, that she is a sinner, but always, and rightly, they make the best out of their circumstances; or that is what we must infer from Cary's depiction of life.

All his characters lack perception: they are too busy living. They are stupid in that exasperating, if retrospectively lovable, manner which is so familiar in real life. Cary ignores all aspects of action which contain elements of calculation not essentially the result of self-delusion.

THIS concentration on the supremacy of mere survival guarantees the superficiality of the view of life which underlies his novels. Mr. Allen writes that this view is "just as Existential," in its Nonconformist English manner, as that of the continental philosophical Existentialist writers; but these, whatever the value of their thought, are above all concerned with just that sort of moral *choice* of which Cary's characters are not even aware. Anguish about being unable to feel anguish for that "cruelty of circumstance that is the form and effect" of Life's being, of which Cary was conscious, but which he chose to accept as inevitable, would have been the one sin for this novelist: the one expansion of the spirit, in that waste of shame in which we must inevitably live, for whose energy he could not have found praise.

The only serious defence against this charge would be that Cary's description of life is accurate. All moral conflict is symbolised by Sara's, it might be said; all human behaviour by that of the crooked and irresponsible Gully Jimson of *The Horse's Mouth,* or the blackmailing drunkard Bonser of *A Fearful Joy*. Tabitha's love for Bonser is 'fearful'—but is nevertheless *joy*. There is thus a sense, though only an implied one, in which Cary's acceptance of the cruelty of the human condition is as 'cynical' as Lewis'

* *The Case for African Freedom* (1941, revised 1944).

* Note to *The Drunken Sailor,* a poem (1947).

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scorn for it. Even if what I have described as the 'stupidity' of his characters is in fact a just metaphor for human behaviour, there remains a fatal objection to this defence. The degree of emphasis which he puts upon the 'grace' of his characters' self-delusion is responsible for a proportionate lack of psychological insight. For human nature acts upon an innate assumption that something like 'goodness'—'altruism', 'objective behaviour'—exists: if it did not believe in the truth of love's demands, why should it invent false and hypocritical definitions of them, as tricks to evade their harshness in the sham world? But our failure to observe these demands is responsible for the guilt we all carry, the need to release the intolerable inner tensions it sets up is the true explanation of everything that is distorted and criminal in action. Even if this assumption is a delusion —if Cary's acceptance of the inevitable cruelty of human circumstance is right—it remains one without which humanity could not continue: one which motivates its cruel history. Politicians like Chester Nimmo in *Prisoner of Grace*—who is, as Mr. Allen rightly observes, in a state of grace, so far as Cary is concerned, just because he believes himself to be God-inspired—could not pursue their crooked paths towards power, had they not developed mechanisms which keep a knowledge of their purpose from reaching consciousness, and which harden growing rapacity into 'convictions' of 'righteousness.' The essential superficiality of Cary's characterisation is, perhaps, more plainly revealed in Chester Nimmo than in any other of his creations. The motives for Nimmo's need to deceive himself, which originate in that innate assumption of 'goodness', whether deluded or not, to which I have referred, are never taken into account. Thus that complex interplay between internal stress and the accident of external circumstance which actually produces character-in-action is ignored; action is all.

Much of Wyndham Lewis' work was a deliberate exploration of the *practical* possibilities of the fact that 'love' is a delusion. But Lewis is more important not only because of his greater power and range, but also because his final perception of the existence of love is intelligent: it operates significantly throughout his work—whatever price he paid for his attempt to escape it. The strategy with which he deployed his forces to counter this growing recognition demonstrates the creative intelligence with which he discerned its manifestations.

It is significant that Cary dealt with self-deception on a progressively larger scale, in a progressively more beneficent spirit, as he developed. Mr. Allen observes that Nina, Nimmo's wife, "knows that he is not a hypocrite . . . he is simply immersed in politics". It is a fair inference; but what a charge of superficiality is implicit in it!

But Cary's vision is a positive one. His sense of love should be enjoyed in his exuberance; his compassion in his portraits of the cruel, like Bonser, or of the crooked, like Nimmo. It is so easy to see that he did not love cruelty itself. His characters have no more depth than his view of life; but because his gusto and verve tell us only too clearly that he would have rejected the implications of his 'philosophy', had he been able to see what they were, we may enjoy their multitudinous vibrancy throughout his work as an authentic demonstration of literary effervescence.

IV

Even Lewis' eulogists would not claim that he provides a sense of the compassionate or gentle in life; but we might well suppose that his emotional opposite, John Middleton Murry, ever devoting himself to the public advocation of one or another form of love, would have called forth the warm admiration of at any rate that section of automata which is love-hallucinated. But this was not so. Not even hysterics spoke of his 'radiance.' The fury with which D. H. Lawrence turned upon Murry was unusual, even for him. And despite the respect which much of his criticism has deservedly attracted, even from quarters as gloomy, grudging, and humourless as the Cell of Leavisian Dialectic,

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the sense of personal appreciation is always lukewarm.

We can feel the reasons for this in most of his books: that tone of obscure cringing masochism with which he wants to spread himself upon us, sacrificial butter of pure devotion to brotherhood, as if we were bread; that disconcertingly violent wobble of his sensibility between religio-utopian hysteria and inspired critical insight. It arouses some sense of dignity in us, equally obscure, which he could not have possessed. He represents, partially but unavoidably, that terrible figure standing behind us, face transfixed with the humourless and intense radiance of permanent loyalty, hand resting lightly and undemandingly upon our shoulder, tensed and ready for the atonement: that irreproachable friend whom we all so loathe, and whose presence horrifies us because we are forced to feel guilt at our dislike of him—and whose own sensibility, being attuned to this, sends out further crippling rays of comprehending forgiveness. Like free insurance, we feel we must refuse. This Murry, the prophet, was a professional sufferer who really wanted to bear everyone else's pain upon his own shoulders, to be a sort of Christ; yet he got no more material for his compassion than the hostility he aroused.

We have seen in Lewis the tragic spectacle of an intelligence of unique power, together with a creative vision almost equal in intensity, plunged into final despair through an inability to accept the known possibility of love. The reason Murry ultimately fails to convince us of the validity of his view of life, despite his devotion to just what the cleverer Lewis chose to lack, completes my argument.

The creative act itself has one 'human' consolation: during it, the creator is insulated from that very metaphysical pressure of self-pretence which makes him what he is. (The purposive 'literary' use to which Lewis put his drawing and painting represents, in this connection, a formula for sanity rather than for freedom, which has no formula). It is a defence against lying, during which the creator is in some sense free, since he is partially possessed by the spirit of the reality which he can never find in himself. If the tragedy of Lewis' defeat was that he allowed his self-love to use this regenerating power in its own interests, Murry's was that throughout his spasmodic, but creative, intuitive awareness ran the same flaw as seems to have distorted his personality. It shows up in the failure of his thought to develop: his beliefs represent a constant semi-hysterical fixation upon an unexamined emotion of compassion. Thus, after getting on O.B.E. for work in political intelligence in the 1914–18 war, he became a pacifist, but abandoned this in 1948 in favour of what the perceptive *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer of his last book called "a holy war of prevention against Russia". In 1938 he contemplated becoming a priest; but finally rejected the efficacy of the Christian Church. A scrutiny of any writer's opinions would, of course, reveal inconsistencies—indiscriminate examinations of the developments and errors of their older contemporaries, in order to 'expose' them, being the invariable practice of the least talented in all junior generations—but what characterises Murry's phases of belief is that all are aspects of a single, undeveloping emotionalism. There is no connecting intellectual thread, only a vague apologetic insistence upon a public exhibition of hand-wringing and tear-shedding. The effect is never of persuasion, or even conviction: but of this desire to record despair with the minimum of restraint. His function as professional sufferer, irrelevant to his intellectual purpose, is seldom unapparent.

His emotionalism is worst exemplified in the epilogue to his study of Shakespeare, which it is hard to believe is not a grotesque parody inserted by some diabolical *alter ego* of the Enemy himself, while the book awaited distribution from the warehouse. It is an imaginary record of a visit by the living Murry to Shakespeare, now dwelling in contentment in Elysium. The banal sentimentality of Shakespeare's remarks, including one to the effect that there

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is a pretty good young newcomer (Keats; I am not sure the name is even mentioned . . .), is an oddly revealing contradiction to some of the superb critical insights in the book. Finally Shakespeare gives Murry an apple, saying, "Take one, they are good apples . . ." which, we assume, means that they will not make us Fall.

It would be manifestly unfair not to refer to the brilliance and value of his criticism at its best: his *Shakespeare* has the distinction of being one of the few worthwhile books on its subject, his work on Keats is indispensable, his long study of Swift perhaps the best yet—a formidable list of achievements. And it is to his credit, rather than otherwise, that he was so frequently able to canalise the energy of his less attractive or rewarding prophetic impulses into the service of criticism. For his remarkable intuitions about his various subjects originated from a masochistic urge to forgive after punishment. And the punishment in this case was that while his subjects *were* creative, he was not: being unable to find a creative framework for his own apprehension of reality, he devoted himself, with passionate intensity, to serving those who had what he lacked. His insight is explained by the habitual reactions of his sensibility to the resentment he automatically assumed he aroused—or would have aroused, had his subject been alive: as I have pointed out, it was constructed to operate on this wave-length. Thus, he was much better, all-round, on the writers from whom he felt most removed. And inasmuch as he did succeed in transmuting his own subjectivity into an awareness of others, an explanation of their motives—Keats, when he was not over-emotional about him; Swift, perhaps most of all—he did achieve a measure of creativeness. It took a critical form because, lacking in the sort of imagination which provides a framework of its own, of poetic form, or the novelist's invention, he required the vessel of real personality. But the best of his criticism is among the best there is.

Unhappily it was the prophet and not the creative critic who had gained control of Murry while he was writing his last book, *Love, Freedom and Society: an analytical comparison of D. H. Lawrence and Albert Schweitzer* (Cape, 1957. 18s.). The difference between *Jonathan Swift* (1954), and this, is the difference between the best and the worst in Murry; and yet if the one is sometimes flawed by the preoccupations of the prophet, the other is frequently redeemed by the insights of the creative critic. It is evident that he was at his best when at work on a new subject, one who had not yet had time to become a receptacle for the unlimited supplies of unattached emotion which Murry discharged, one whom he had never known personally—and one who was, preferably, the type of person who might very well have disliked him. In *Jonathan Swift* the conditions seemed to have been right, and as a whole it is his finest book.

The prophet's persistent adoption of an attitude of self-flagellating expiation fulfilled a deep need, of course: the overt subservience had its hidden complement of aggression. Immediately his critical attention was distracted from its proper function of scrutinising the creative personalities of the past, his emotionalism started to make use of contemporaries who had made him suffer, either personally (Lawrence) or by their possession of capacities he lacked (Schweitzer). Not only did he 'serve' his subject, but also he 'performed' them, as a pianist performs (and interprets) a sonata someone else composed. '*I* cannot create,' he seems to be saying, 'but here is my substitute: I tune the strings of my substitute's violin that you may hear *his* ravishing music.' He was never satisfied with this, of course, any more than he had been satisfied with his early novels and verse. It was the initial creative failure which lay behind all the subsequent activities of the prophet: for it symbolised his defeat. Is it this self-dissatisfaction, I wonder, that accounts for the curiously sour tone of the study of Schweitzer, who gave up his career as an organist (performer of others' compositions) in order to run a hospital in an obscure country—an *artiste manqué* turned social worker?

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All Murry could offer at the end was a re-affirmation of his old belief that by "discovering what Lawrence was, we discover what we are", together with a newly dressed-up version of his original unsatisfactory equation: Lawrence equals Christ plus Sex. His conclusions are unconvincing, nor do they suggest that he had discovered any more valid a solution than Lewis. That his attitude was more positive is not enough: so is Mr. Godfrey Winn's.... His advocacy of the sanctity of marriage, based on Lawrence's "deep reverence for the sexual mystery", is certainly right in its direction. But it is shapeless, and lacks even the authority of self-conviction. Murry rarely escaped the vagueness forced upon him by the uncontrolled diffuseness of his emotionalism. "I have betrayed thee, Lorenzo," he is said to have remarked to Lawrence upon one occasion*; and if we take that alone (after all, let us face it, he might well have said it even if he didn't), we can discern the nature of the thing with which he had to struggle.

He cannot accept the Resurrection as a physical fact, he tells us, and yet he concludes this last book: "We know that Jesus died to establish his love as God.... We know he lives now in the hearts of individual and mortal men, and only there." His account of Jesus is well above the escape-level of ordinary exoteric Christianity (which he did, after all, reject); but it is evident that he was not sure; there is no ring of authenticity. Can we be asked to accept that sort of message? Do we know it at all?

V

THERE is a passage about creative writing near the end of *Love, Freedom and Society* which will serve to indicate why I have chosen to judge these four writers by such apparently irrelevant standards. Rightly, Murry remarks: "Now, if ever, tragedy should come into its own, as a form of art and a mode of consciousness". And then he continues: "Yet—who would deny it?—relatively to our circumstance our literature is trivial: either as poetry, by its esotericism, unhappily remote from the general consciousness, or as the novel, by its concentration on the superficialities of rootless existence, lacking in depth of background".

Murry's answer to this despair, and to the "sense of pathos of the Christian civilisation" is "by learning to regard the history of Jesus as the archetypal tragedy and by entering into the spiritual tragedy that comes from it". It is not a convincing answer, nor can we feel that he truly participated in it.

He was right, I suppose, in asking that 'tragedy', creative literature, should now or never come into its own (the truly creative writer is perhaps too busy trying to preserve creativity in himself to advocate its necessity); but because he could not himself write it, and, equally, because he found contemporary literature trivial, he chose to put ideas into its place. But an *idea* of something, or of someone—Jesus, for example—has not the authenticity of felt experience. The literature of ideas is ultimately a trick by which 'values' are set up about which people pretend to agree, but about which, because of the solipsist nature of 'normal' experience, there can exist no 'agreement' outside the world of poetry. It is a trick to escape from the knowledge that we are alone in a loveless world. I say a word such as 'Love!' and some other pretends to understand, and thus, in this mutual act of false affirmation, loneliness is temporarily relieved; but next day we are at war.

True communication, however, is not achieved by the deliberate description of a private universe, either—however eloquent this may be. Totally subjective literature such as surrealistic novels or even *Finnegan's Wake* reflect no more than their authors' greater certainty of the essential loneliness of the personality. The icy consequences of consciously attempting to combine the two, to present a private universe as a system of ideas, are described in *Self-Condemned*.

When it does communicate, literature has a form which grows from itself—just as a

* This should not be confused with that other occasion upon which Lawrence asked Murry not to betray *him*.

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poem finds its own shape only as it is being written. It represents subjectivity somehow pushed beyond the desolate echoing limits of the universe of the ego, by the power of a desire for love—to say by the power of love itself would be to enter into the anti-poetic pretence of ideas. We can only truly know what we have ourselves experienced; that is the one principle of communication. But the other is that we must acknowledge the desire to know the truth about our condition.

Men such as Professors Ryle and Ayer, whose secret motive is the escape from the consequences of their own subjectivity, by 'showing' that it is irrelevant (to their work), have savaged the name of poetry, not only by the implications—the bleak match-boxes and inkstands of their neutralised world—of their thought, but also by their refusal to discuss it. Had they dared to do so, we should have a clearer notion of their limitations; a sense of their humanity. As it is, we must realise that we are offered nothing better than a choice between their loveless logic, Campbell's simpleton-subjectivity, the confusions of Murry (and, in a different way, of Cary), or the negative vision of the one whose diabolical wisdom dominates them all: Wyndham Lewis. These, or the war of now. We know that behind the 'verifiable statements' of modern logic lies a contempt for poetry whose terror of love far outstrips the puppet-world of Lewisian anguish. It is one of our alternatives: if we reject the necessity of the impossible-to-sustain language of reality, reject what poetry stands for, then that is the grey and robot world in which we may 'live': reduced to animals whose communication with one another, for fear of offering their verifiable privacies in delusions of attachment, is restricted to the bizarre trivia of the logician's world: syllogisms, soccer matches, and military movements. Only what could not be important ever, at all, could be allowed to exist: and upon that basis 'humanity' could achieve 'communication'.

I do not, of course, suggest that poetry is the only means of 'salvation': there are others, equally difficult. But poetry, and the scale of creative expression which runs down from it, is the one concerned with words. If it is impossible, the consequences of rejecting it will lead us, nevertheless, in the end, to give ourselves "the fearful name of Zero"; of ignoring it, to the animal-limbo of the logician's nightmare. No one has put the problem more beautifully in prose than that other Lewis, the poet, Alun Lewis.... "There doesn't seem to be any question more directly relevant than this one, of what survives of all the Beloved.... Acceptance seems so spiritless, protest so vain. In between the two I live."

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Angus Wilson

A Conversation with E. M. Forster

THE introductions over, it was E.M.F. and not I who broke into the desultory chatter to suggest that the interview might begin. "I don't suppose," he said, "that this is what you want to talk about. . . ." I write "said" and I also write four dots because E.M.F. speaks in quick, little bursts of words which end, as it seems, inconclusively, and then he usually adds one or two words more, which though they seem tangential, nevertheless are often the real core of what he is saying. It is as though a firework did its stuff adequately but not excitingly, never fizzling but hardly illuminating, and then just as the onlookers are about to give a polite smile and say "very pretty" in a slightly disappointed tone, there shoot up one or two very bright lights that in turn fade away, making one wish for more. But E.M.F.'s indecisive, spasmodic manner seemed to me to contain ("to mask" would imply all sorts of intention of which I saw no sign) firm decision. I had expected and intended to call to order for the interview to begin; it was in fact, he who did so. No doubt, he would say, that this was part of his duties as host—duties to which he gave continuous and subtle attention. Nevertheless he led the way and I think it marked an underlying determination that continued throughout our meeting.

I sat back in my armchair. The friend who had accompanied me sat back in the armchair opposite, ready to undertake the silent office of noting E.M.F.'s replies. Between us on the sofa E.M.F. at once reclined in relaxation and sat expectant and attentive for my first question. Before us on a long table were drinks and I noted that, in our distaste for gin, my friend and I had exhausted E.M.F.'s supply of Dubonnet. My guest's conscience kept this nagging at the back of my mind while the interview proceeded. I suspected that E.M.F. also felt a similar hostly concern. I hoped so because in that case the suspicions of similarity of temperament between us that had made me happy to undertake the job of interviewing in which I was a complete novice would be justified. I liked to believe that E.M.F. had also thought such compatability probable when he had responded so warmly and kindly to my request for an interview.

Having, as I believe the better sort of theatrical producer does, sketched in "positions," I shall now add a word about décor before the play begins. E.M.F.'s room at King's is large, with a pleasant aspect over a courtyard containing trees. Having established by letter and in conversation my love of gardening, I named these trees wrongly. E.M.F., with kindly deference to my own stated superior knowledge, nevertheless gave them their right name. The room is dominated by a large dark brown* chimney piece with alcoves containing blue and white china. We sat facing the chimney piece. The walls are liberally covered with paintings in which family portraits or copies of family portraits dominate. One is a charming conversation piece in which E.M.F. pointed out to us his great aunt. There is a most pleasing "Turner" done by a great-

* I had written "black" but E.M.F. has corrected me. I am not surprised as I have a horror of dark brown.

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uncle and given to E.M.F.'s mother by Festing Jones. None of this seems unduly to stress family piety but only to be a necessary setting for E.M.F. If I were writing a satirical story I should say that the bookcases contained "many, well-worn, old friends," but it would be a falsification, they are just much-used books. The other end of the room was laid for the luncheon he was kindly giving us later. The chairs were suitably littered with books and papers and also with a tweed cap which E.M.F. wore when he later took us round the Fellows' garden. On the handle of a desk door there hung a string of amber beads on which I remarked. E.M.F. told me that they were beads carried by Greeks in their pockets and that they were merely used to finger and play with. It is a revelation of me, perhaps, rather than of him that I was not sure whether he was "spoofing" me when he said this. And a further mark perhaps of how I like ambiguities in human contacts, that though I could verify this, I prefer to keep it as a doubt in my mind. The only objects of great surprise to me were two very small and oddly-shaped glass vases each holding a few petunias. This was a form of flower decoration so unfamiliar to me that my eyes kept returning to them in order to assimilate them into the otherwise ordinary, comfortable, and very pleasing room.

ALTHOUGH I had never interviewed anyone, I had often been interviewed and I had determined to avoid the stock, routine questions, that had so often irritated me. Also as I felt sure that I could not guess what aspects of E.M.F.'s work would interest the readers of ENCOUNTER, even had I wished to do so, I had therefore decided to concentrate only on the things that puzzled and interested me in his work. People have suggested likenesses very flattering to me between our writings. In my own view, there are none as far as writing and the milieux portrayed are concerned. I know, however, that what I think to be E.M.F.'s ethic has influenced me enormously both directly and by reaction. Indeed a great deal of what I have written has been an attempt to soften the rigours of what I feel to be his Calvinism, perhaps by knocking some of his saints on the head and by liberating some of his damned. Nevertheless, for those who read aright my final sympathies are with his hierarchy. This interview then must be read as a personal gratification of my own concerns with E.M.F.'s work; its illuminations and its failures to illuminate are equally the product of my obsessed approach.

I had formulated the questions to come down to what I thought to be the brassiest of tacks immediately. E.M.F. clearly did not feel all my questions to be as fundamental as I thought them—hence on occasion the interview proceeded as a street corner oration by me followed by the most polite but puzzled "Hear, hear" from him.

I began by making one of these speeches. E.M.F. listened attentively and I spoke slowly for the statement was long and perhaps unfamiliar to him in content. Before I had finished it, however, I was tempted to rush through the last sentences because I felt that it was all more beside the point than I had foreseen. This may have been "second thoughts"; it may also have been due to a communication of E.M.F.'s feelings. I'm not sure.

A.W. "I believe your work to be as powerful an influence in the moral outlook of a number of my generation as Shaw's on an earlier one. Not as wide but deeper. I have thought that this may be because in humanistic terms you have expressed so completely for those not professing religious beliefs the idea that human virtue and salvation are not a matter of works but an expression of an inner grace. There are no external distinguishing marks between your goats and your sheep—they cannot help themselves, they are either fundamentally good or they are not. Would you comment?"

E.M.F. (*receiving this without enthusiasm*). "The goats and sheep are too plain, surely. At least, many people have said so. No external sign? No. The goats are.... Well, failure to love marks them."

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He did not comment on my use of theological terms, but I did not press this.

A.W. "For various reasons your goats all fail by cruelty. I have only once detected cruelty in the author towards his characters. Your attitude to Leonard Bast has always shocked me. Did you—do you—think that grace is impossible for someone born in his circumstances?"

E.M.F. was roused and interested in this. It confirmed, he told us, a recent experience in which a young man, thinking himself like Leonard, had supposed that E.M.F. might judge him harshly from the start. Perhaps, he said, there was a suggestion in Leonard Bast that "the rural can be saved, but the urban not." [I interjected the name of Stephen from *The Longest Journey*]. "I was romantic as a young man about the country ...." He left us to conclude that he would not judge so definitely now. He had no intention of condemning Leonard in any case, he said. "Leonard could develop well. I think he did probably. Circumstances were against him. Perhaps it's a failure in technique." [I would note here as characteristic that whereas many authors would probably try to win sympathy by blaming their own powers, E.M.F., when from time to time he put forward criticisms of his own work, only did so tentatively as possible explanations.]

Later in a question about criticism which had led us to discuss D. H. Lawrence the interview returned to Leonard Bast.

E.M.F. "Lawrence could be very trying. He spent one whole afternoon condemning my work. At last I asked him if there was anything good in it. 'Yes,' he said, 'Leonard Bast. That was courageous.'"

A.W. (*again rushing in*). "Well, of course, he hated sentiment about the underdog."

E.M.F. (*a little sadly*). "Yes, I suppose that was the reason. But I was pleased with it all the same."

I thought that such inept and slightly discourteous inrushes on my part might easily mark any future interchange I had with E.M.F.

A.W. "Apart from inner moral grace, there is in your work the idea of momentary vision —onwards from stories in "Celestial Omnibus"—is this in any sense moral or is it aesthetic or both?"

E.M.F. (*registering, I think, a certain amusement at the confused crudity of my question —looking bewildered*). "Well—a bit of both? You're not expecting me to discuss the differences, I hope."

A.W. "No, no. But Tibby's aunt, for example, she is surely among the saved, yet I hardly think...."

E.M.F. "No, poor dear, she would not have been capable of that. I'm trying to think who *had* this vision. Stephen, of course, had something of the sort."

[*The question died out in puzzlement.*]

A.W. "The most moving or frightening thing for me in all your work is the negative vision of Mrs. Moore and her subsequent death—for in her the fountain of good wisdom that still lives on after Mrs. Wilcox's death is suddenly cut off. I hope you will not think it impertinent if I ask whether this collapse of Mrs. Moore is connected with your ceasing to write novels?"

Under this (as I had hoped) bombshell E.M.F. did not reel at all.

E.M.F. "No no, it's not impertinent at all. It's a moment of negation. I suppose it's the same thing as the vision we have discussed with its back turned."

Looking at this answer now it gives me great satisfaction, but, at the time, I was much disappointed. Mrs. Moore had over the years assumed such an importance for me, stood so much for the blasting of creativity, that I think I half expected E.M.F. to faint when I put that question.

[On reading this script E.M.F. has stated that Mrs. Moore's influence does *not* disappear as I say, but reappears in the third section of the novel. He feels that we could with profit have discussed this section further. The fault is mine because it is here that my sympathies with his work desert me.]

We went on to talk about his ceasing to write novels. [Here I may note that whenever I referred to any of E.M.F.'s methods or approaches to writing later in the interview and used the past tense, he very

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properly corrected me by answering in the present.] Mrs. Moore was not, we established, the cause of his ceasing to write novels.

E.M.F. "I just drifted out of it."

A.W. (*continuing*) In *A Passage to India* there is an overt statement of the difficulty of communication between people. I have sometimes thought this was implicit in all your work. Could that have led you to give up novel writing?"

E.M.F. (*with a combination of seriousness and amusement difficult to describe*). "Yes, certainly. The possibility of human communication is very small. But that surely is not a reason for ceasing to write novels. There are always the meetings and the breakings. I didn't really stop writing. There was the beginning of a novel, of course, *Arctic Summer,* before *Howards End.* And then later I tried a number of things but they didn't seem to work out."

A.W. "There's an aspect of your work of which I'm more critical. I mean the idea of a free natural pagan way of living which might almost be said to be Man before the Fall. Perhaps, the Mediterranean is the seat of this Paradise? If so you're in good English tradition—Samuel Butler, Norman Douglas. . . .

E.M.F. (*taking this up happily*) "I let down lightly those with instinctive moral feeling. Yes. Butler influenced me of course. He taught me how to look at money when I was young. And as to the Italians. Yes. There is a graciousness that leads into grace."

[I made certain objections to Butler—especially of his suspicion of the dangers of entrapment into marriage with the lower orders that young men like Ernest Pontifex run. E.M.F. agreed but suggested that the history of Paoli explained that. (Neither I nor E.M.F., although we knew it well, could find Paoli's name at this point.) E.M.F. continued that in a forthcoming article in the *London Magazine* I would see how little he shared Butler's prejudices about marriage which he agreed with me were silly. "In the article you'll see that I've put forward the golden wedding as one of the great achievements of civilisation." This was said lightly but with marked seriousness.]

A.W. "One of the worst feelings I have in the early stages of writing a novel is that whole aspects of my vision of life are being omitted. . . ."

E.M.F. (*taking this up with easy interest*) "I think that's surely a general truth about writing. As we take up our pens we have a remembrance of all the previous occasions and fall into our 'general writing outlook.' "

A.W. "I can't rid myself at such times of a pervasive irony."

E.M.F. "I should say that *I* am tempted into intermittent high spirits."

Later after luncheon, in general conversation, I referred the concert description in *Howards End* to these high spirits. E.M.F. expressed satisfaction with the scene, "although, of course, attitudes to music have changed."

THE IMPORTANCE of music to E.M.F. was underlined when, in connection with Sawston, we were discussing the changes in public schools since *The Longest Journey.* He cited only "the more serious attitude taken towards the appreciation of music."

A.W. "I have sometimes thought that you accept passivity and gentleness too much at their face value. May I explain? When people in your novels defend themselves by active means—sarcasm, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and so on, they are usually goats or near-goats. But surely passivity and gentleness can be as actively used as weapons of defence and be as destructive to others. I often think Rickie (in *The Longest Journey*) has something of this."

E.M.F. "Yes. Indeed they can. But that surely is part of my dislike for cruelty. Yes, Rickie—I could kick him for his lame leg, you know."

A.W. "Butler perhaps would have done."

E.M.F. "Yes. I wouldn't go that far with Butler."

[In connection with this question of passivity I raised the question of Mr. Woodhouse (in *Emma*)—why when other

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fathers were so severely judged was Mr. Woodhouse so exempted from criticism—was this Jane Austen's admiration for passivity? E.M.F. thought on the whole that Mr. W. was as he was "because this was part of the Highbury picture." He seemed interested, however, in the idea that parents in general were the betrayers of morality in Jane Austen's work—saying "Yes, certainly Mr. Bennett. And in *Persuasion,* of course."

I got the impression, however, from this and some conversation at luncheon about Trilling's essays on Jane Austen's novels that though he was interested by such speculations about her work, he was suspicious of their rapidly becoming far-fetched and preferred to take her novel, so important an influence on him, as a world long accepted and not susceptible to much speculation. On the other hand, when I recalled Jane Austen's realisation that Mrs. Norris would have been a better woman had she been called upon to manage Mrs. Price's house at Portsmouth—he welcomed the recollection with a kind of personal pleasure "Did she say that? I hadn't remembered. I'm glad she said that."]

My next question concerned E.M.F.'s division of characters in novels into those in the round, and flat characters. Here he seemed most concerned to know if I thought this was a useful concept. The discussion led on to Dickens (my own hobby horse) and was perhaps profitable mainly for a characteristically sharp and penetrating remark of E.M.F.'s. I said that whereas Mrs. Dalloway who was drawn in the round never came into real existence, one could guess at Mr. Micawber's inner being although he was drawn only in the flat.

E.M.F. "Yes, but we couldn't guess that he would make good in Australia, could we?"

I asked about E.M.F.'s work, written schemes or notes for novels, etc.

E.M.F. "I have very few notes. The plot is in my mind. Then I alter as I go on from day to day. The re-writing is done in 'blocks.' "

The origins of *The Longest Journey,* he said, began with his hearing about a man with a half brother, and with a strong emotional attachment to Wiltshire that he had at that time.

The ages, past history of characters he never notes, because they are in his head.

Dialogue is all "heard."

Theme, he thought came before plot. "But I like a good plot. *Howards End* has a good plot, I think."

[He expressed pleasure later that I thought most highly of *The Longest Journey* of all his novels and said that he agreed and was at present "looking into the origins of it."]

On criticism, E.M.F. said that this was valuable to him where it was technical. He also recalled that a review of *The Longest Journey,* said to be by Lord Beveridge, had pointed out that 44 per cent of the characters died sudden deaths.

A.W. "Do you think the present return to a more traditional form of novel a necessary recuperation after years of experiment or a sign of artistic bankruptcy?"

E.M.F. "I don't think I know about that. Aren't we both working in the same tradition?"

A.W. "Yes, but in between. Virginia Woolf, for example."

E.M.F. "Oh, yes, I see what you mean. For me it's a matter of temperament. I stopped being influenced by Virginia when I knew that her feelings were not mine. . . ."

[As to interior monologue, E.M.F. said, "Perhaps it would have been a help. But conscience probably . . . it's surely a bit of a cheat."]

To this formal interview I add a few remarks relating to his work that came out in the course of later conversation.

I remarked that I could not help being fond of Agnes (in *The Longest Journey*).

E.M.F. (*sharply*) "Why are you?"

A.W. (*trying to excuse himself*) "There was something moving when she first came to Rickie's room. . . ."

E.M.F. "I saw through her."

Later I said that it made me sad that Rickie and Gerald could not communicate.

E.M.F. "Yes, but Gerald was no good really.

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He wasn't up to communication with Rickie."

When I spoke with disgust at Mr. Beebe's talk on marriage, E.M.F. replied: "Yes, he was disappointing, wasn't he?"

E.M.F. said that he did not mind changes being made to his work for drama, radio etc.—for example the removal of the last chapter of *Passage to India*—the novels stood by themselves.

I asked him how he regarded the mentioning of characters from one novel in another —e.g. Cecil from *Room with a View* in *Howards End* and so on. When I had done the same thing from *Hemlock* to *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* I had been sharply attacked and told it was worthy of Hugh Walpole.

E.M.F. (*chuckling*) "Or Balzac."

*

On reading this script E.M.F. wrote—"My admiration for your work, the short stories in particular, should be worked in." This, it is true, was made clear during the interview, but as I do not see how to work it in, I append it with evident satisfaction. I note that his preference for my short stories is less surprising after the interview than it would have been before.

(I wish to thank Mr. Garrett for his kindness in taking down much of the interview.)

Virgin and Unicorn

WELL now, the virgin and the unicorn—
Although its point and details are obscure
The theme speeds up the pulses, to be sure.
No doubt it is the thought of that long horn
Inclined towards a lady, young, well-born,
Unfearful, naïve, soft, ecstatic, pure.
How often, dreaming, have we found the cure
For our malaise, to tear or to be torn!

In fact, the beast and virgin merely sat,
I seem to think, in some enamelled field;
He milky, muscular, and she complete
In kirtle, bodice, wimple. Even that
Tame conjugation makes our eyeballs yield
Those gems we long to cast at someone's feet.

Roy Fuller

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Michael Swan

The Falls of Towakaima

A British Guiana Interior

THERE was a lot for me to do at the Five Mile Camp; although each of my two porters could carry about 90 lbs., such essentials as hammocks, lantern, paraffin, blankets, ammunition, and trading goods made it impossible to take much food. I had to weigh the value of a light tarpaulin against four tins of corned beef. Finally the two loads were put aside ready for the morning, and the rest returned to their boxes.

At seven o'clock the Indians appeared round the point of the road. They were small men—Rodrigues Marques, and his nephew, Cyril, who was about twenty-five. They wore shirts and khaki trousers, but no shoes. Rodrigues had a "Spanish" style moustache that went well with his name, and Cyril had the fine dark down on his face that showed that he was not a pure-blooded Indian. They spoke Carib, called themselves Caribs, and had lived the life of Caribs, but somewhere in their family tree a European ancestor would be found. Rodrigues told me sometime later that long ago a Spaniard had come to the village where his people lived, and that one of his forefathers had been that Spaniard. He explained this with the few words of English he had picked up at the manganese mining camp.

Cyril and Rod, as I decided to call him, packed my baggage into the basket carriers, or *warishis,* covered it with sections of plantain leaf and laced the whole securely with thin lianas. Then, without a word, they hoisted their burdens on their backs and strode off through the long grass towards the forest. The forest trail was not what I had expected. Years ago it had been a simple Indian trail, wide enough only for travelling in Indian file, but during the frontier troubles with Venezuela it had been hurriedly widened and given the grandiose name of "military road," a name it still humorously bears on the maps. When the possibility of war with Venezuela had passed, the road was given back to nature, and I had expected it to be overgrown with that worst obstacle of the forest, secondary vegetation. But trees and vegetation do not grow easily at the sunless ground-level of the forest; the thousands of green saplings which make passage between the grown trees so difficult must wait in hope that a parent tree will fall, allowing the air and sun to come to them so that the fittest may start its swift climb to the canopy above.

And so today the trail was like some dark Sussex ride in autumn after heavy rain—though no horse could have stood for long the corrugation of the tangled roots that lay beneath the mud and the endless sodden leaves that were about to disintegrate into muddy humus; for leaves are falling every minute of the day and night in the rain forests. Twice a year each individual tree sheds its leaves, but the new green leaves are full blown before the last of the old leaves has fallen. In colour the leaves reverse the order of nature as we know it in Europe. Once, when I flew over the forest at the end

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of a period of rain I was delighted with the sudden autumnal appearance of the tree canopies—the most delicate yellows and pale bronzes, instead of the black-greenness of a week before. In a week the old green leaves had fallen, replaced by the new ones, bronze and yellow.

I FELT strangely excited as I walked the trail. I was back in the deep forests again after three years, and for as long as I can remember forests and woods have given me some kind of primitive release. Thoreau speaks for me when he says: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." The woods taught him to "simplify, simplify." I think they've taught me to see the marvellous complication of European civilisation with a little more clarity, and to value it all the more.

We walked all that day, crossing creeks and cutting our way through the saplings to avoid areas of secondary vegetation. I feasted my eyes as well as I was able to—in the forest it's wise to raise your eyes as little as possible from the ground immediately before you. It was foolish, I knew, to look upwards and sense that "terrible doubt of appearances" which the forest can give more than any other scene; but I would look around me until I tripped on a root or over a fallen tree. It was these trees I liked least, because of their perpetual obstruction and because they are favourite sleeping places of snakes during the day. A wise man never steps over a trunk, for that would make his leg a close target for the awakened snake; he steps up on to the log and then down, taking a full pace to do so. The effort needed is much greater, and it's the mark of the forest greenhorn to be wise in this way. We saw few snakes that day, and I myself only one—a beautiful coral snake that sluggishly moved off across the sodden leaves, too sleepy to be vicious. The snakes are there, but unless one has an Indian's eye one doesn't see them, and the ones that the Indian sees are those that are too sluggish to retreat as the vibrations of approaching feet give warning. There is only one snake in the forests who does not feel fear in the presence of man, who will rush into attack from a hundred yards, and kill with certainty if his fangs go home: the bushmaster.

But the dangers of the forest are largely mythical; the legend of the green hell will take a long time to die. What dangers there are—jaguars, snakes, and the ferocious giant ant-eater—are nothing compared with the fatigue brought on by twisted roots and mud, or the lacerations of the razor-grass in areas of secondary growth; the backache as you walk through tunnels in this vegetation; the perpetual saturation of body and clothes with a cool sweat, in air that is humid without being ferociously hot; the sudden deluges of rain against which there is no protection, nothing to be done but walk on with shirt and trousers heavy and clinging, thinking of the sunny clearing where you can camp and change into dry clothes. The physical dangers are forgotten; they themselves build in a man's mind a psychological resistance to them. Absolute necessity can rouse one marvellously. Within an hour I was beginning to forget my dread of snakes, and I found myself walking, with what would have before seemed to me an inconceivable agility, across a slender, slippery tree-trunk bridge, with a creek tumbling white over rocks some twenty feet below. We crossed thirty creeks in the same way that morning, the Indians trotting along the trunks with their prehensile toes clinging to the moss and bark. I crossed always with immense deliberation, the insteps of my boots finding out the curve of the tree, knowing that I must not fall. Sometimes Cyril or Rod would take pity on me and come back to take my hand.

WE MADE good time that morning, averaging about two miles an hour. Rod walked in front and Cyril behind me. Sometimes they would point to a spot on the leaves that seemed to me no different from the rest, and tell me a herd of peccary,

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the bush-hog, had been through during the night. We saw no animal that day or on the days that followed. To see animals during the day in this forest one must search for their tracks and follow them to the lairs where they lie sleeping, waiting for night to come and the hunting to begin. Nearly all the animals of the Amazon forest are nocturnal. At one point Rod turned to me and in a calm voice with an inflection suggesting that he was asking my permission, said, "Me shoot tiger, sir." My heart jumped and I looked round for the animal he seemed to have spotted so casually. He smiled the remote Indian smile when he realised what I had thought and explained that we had come to the place where, two weeks before, he had shot a jaguar. Knowing that Indians only shoot jaguars who have become troublesome, I asked him why he had killed it. "Him kill me good hunting dog, sir," he answered.

At mid-day, with the sunlight refracting feebly on the planes of the leaves far above us, we sat down to rest and to eat some raisins and chocolate. I sat on the great, pelvis-like buttress of a mora tree, whose trunk towered up smooth, straight and branchless for two hundred feet before bursting, like some petrified firework, into the mysterious canopy, a world too distant for us to see or hear the activities of its inhabitants.

Rested, and without the preoccupations of roots and obstructions, I began to look at the forest with all my senses fully employed. Our dark world below was like some subterranean country that had barely known the benefit of the sun. Columns of mora, cedar, silverballi, crabwood, and savannadalli, unadorned with branch or leaf, stretched themselves taut with the effort to reach the sun. At ground level there was no vegetation between them, only the slim and patient saplings; a few lianas were drooping at the middle levels, for lianas, like the trees they attach themselves to, exist to escape the pallid, lifeless lower world. Even the trunks of the trees are like monolithic aerial roots whose existence is only justified when they have reached the upper world. Below there are no insects in the air, no flowers except in the oases of sunlight, no orchids or epiphytes, few birds other than the nesting maam and powis. From above I could hear the screech of a macaw or trogon, or the quick, nervous cry of the pai-paio, and once more I looked up longingly into the canopy. That is the frustration of the tropical forest; what life and colour one would see if only one walked all day in the upper world, the unending tree-roof, where the burgeoned trees mass like vegetable clouds, hosts to orchids and vines, fritillaries and the great morphos butterflies who never come to earth but sail like birds always in the canopy; where marabunta wasps raid the flowers and small insects move unknowingly into the beautiful, innocuous-seeming petals of the pitcher flowers, to be trapped and slowly devoured by sinister osmotic action; where sloths move dreamily along the branches, their bodies hanging upside down; where ant-eaters from the forest floor come in search of food; where the families of howler monkeys dismally await their urge to roar. But most of all I should like to walk in the canopy to see the birds, for it is here, in the sun, that the coloured birds live; toucans, parrots, macaws, trogons, the glorious varieties of humming birds, with their feathers gleaming and fading phosphorescently as the light falls from different angles; the colonies of bunya birds, and the snow-white bell-birds.

But all this was a world of the imagination; no man has ever lived in the forest canopy or visited it long enough to know its secrets; it is a world immune even to the scientific predatoriness of man, who can climb to the top summits of mountains but can never climb through the vegetation and see that imagined moment when the queen ant who has flown up to the sun from the forest floor makes coitus with her suitor and then falls in one long, dead fall, back to revive in her nest in a fallen tree trunk.

I lowered my eyes after these few fanciful minutes. I would see no trogons here below, with their scarlet chests, only the dun coloured maams and powis, or an occasional ant-bird. No orchids, tillandsaeas or cattleyas,

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nor even the strange insects that provide food for the birds. And this world, with its still air and silence, is man's strata of the forest.* It was only here that I would be able to see into the life of things.

AFTER we had eaten we moved on up the escarpment. Rain mercifully held off for the rest of the day, and there were fewer creeks, although the areas of sunlit space—and consequent vegetation—increased. Always, as we pushed through the undergrowth, we could see the same scarlet flower, the somuto, petals tightly rolled before opening and, like so many flowers of the tropics, obscene. I realised later why there were so many open spaces; this flat part of the forest had once been a favourite area for Indian cultivation. The Indians made their little "garden places" by cutting down the trees and burning the stumps and saplings. In the resulting humus they would bury their sticks of cassava and leave them untended until the time of harvest. In spite of the usual speed of growth in the tropics it takes nearly a year for the cassava roots to mature. Various sections of the field are planted at different times, so that some roots reach maturity during each month of the year. And then the land, after some years, would tire, or the Indians themselves would wander northwards, and the garden places would be left to nature.

At four o'clock that day, after we had walked some twenty miles, Cyril said to me, "We come Pedro's garden place, sir, camp there." I was relieved. I had imagined we might have to sling our hammocks between trees in the forest itself. There was, Cyril added, a *benab,* or hut, at the garden place. We turned off the main trail into a narrow path, and a few minutes later we were in an area of cleared bush about a hundred yards square. There were cassava plots surrounded by grass and a magnificent plantain tree, whose great tattered leaves flapped in the breeze and were glossy enough to reflect the beams of the sun. The sky was blue and clear, the sun, after our day in pale, filtered light, a thing to worship. In the middle of the clearing stood the *benab,* a hut open on all sides, in which we found Pedro's simple property—he himself was working for the manganese camp. There were his black calabashes, his low wooden seat, his *matapi,* a tubular basket for expressing the poisonous acids from the cassava, his piece of wood with sharp stones embedded in it, used to scrape the cassava into flour, his *manairi* for sifting the flour, and his *sandura,* a drum of peccary skin, to beat during the lonely hours of the evening and to scare away the evil spirits and the marauding animals of the forest. The place was ours to do as we wished with, and the plantains were ours to cut; that is the communism of the forest and no man disputes it. If an Indian goes down to his landing and finds somebody has taken his canoe he shows no anger, simply goes off in search of another man's canoe. The more remote from civilisation a tribe is the more any sense of personal property is lacking; thieving becomes meaningless and dishonesty must take other forms.

I changed into dry clothes and put my soaking drills on to a tree stump to dry in the sun. Rod looked at me and without saying a word walked off into the bush, returning with a length of bush-rope, strong and pliable as cord. A few minutes later my clothes were hanging drably from the line. It was now Cyril's turn to go into the bush, but he went in search of powis or maam. Evening was approaching and the partridge-like maam would be awake. I heard soon the distant, rolled sound of the maam's cry, which has given it one of its Indian names, "dur-r-r-aquar-r-ra." But it was not the cry

* It was Alexander von Humboldt who described the rain forests of South America as "forest piled on forest." Even the canopy is stratified, and many full grown trees never reach the upper canopy. It is at these intermediate levels that the ant-eaters forage. On the forest floor climatic conditions vary very little, with not more than 5° variation in temperature in twenty-four hours. In the canopy the variation is 20°. Rain does not evaporate on the floor, so that conditions are always wet; in the canopy rain evaporates at such a rate that from above steam appears to be rising from the forest. On the floor air moves at an average rate of a mile a day, while the air in the canopy averages ten miles a day.

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of the bird itself; it was Cyril himself enticing the female to reply and lead him to her. The reply came, a minute later a shot rang through the forest, and soon Cyril appeared, plucking the bird as he walked. We knew that he would not have missed his mark; ammunition is so scarce in the forests that an Indian will only shoot when he is certain of his prey, stalking it until he is so close to it that he cannot miss. Most Indians are superb mimics, not only of animals and birds, but of men. They can mislead even the jaguar; I heard of an Indian who while luring an *acouri* with its call was jumped on by a tiger who thought he had found his favourite meat. They bring the *yarrau* fish towards them with a low, seducing whistle; they produce the gentle mating call of the tapir by blowing into their enclosed hands; they attract certain fishes to the air by splashing the surface of the river in such a way that the fishes imagine ripened seeds have fallen. I noticed that if ever I taught an Indian a new English word he would reproduce not merely the right sound but an unintentionally satirical echo of my own particular way of saying the word. A few years ago an Englishman came across a very primitive Indian in the bush, who approached him with outstretched hand, saying in a perfect parody of an educated Englishman's accent, "I say, how absolutely delightful to meet you." He then relapsed into his own language, for the phrase he had spoken was all the English he knew. Some ten years before he had been a bearer on an expedition led by an Englishman who had always greeted fellow Englishmen whom they met in this manner.

WHILE Cyril began to draw the maam I lay pleasantly in my hammock. During the day, walking in file, there had been little chance for us to come to know each other, although I had been impressed by both men's wish to be good hosts to me in the forest. They had shown no emotion of any kind all day; I knew it was not in the Indian's nature to be overtly friendly, but I knew as well that their detachment did not mean indifference. I was being studied, sized up. They talked very quietly in Carib all the time, and I imagined that they were discussing me and coming towards some kind of judgment. For my own part I had spent the day trying to win their confidence in me as a "bush-man." This wasn't mere vanity; if Indians disapprove of the character of the man they are conducting through the forest that man may wake one morning to find he is alone, without standing a chance of finding his way along the scarcely marked trails. Apart from this motive of self-preservation I was hoping I might be able to make some kind of rough contact with the Carib mind. I had noted the fine words of Richard Schomburgk, who explored British Guiana in the early 19th century. They are worth recording, because they contain so much wisdom about civilised man's relations with primitive man:

> "Treat . . . an Indian as a friend so as to let him feel through intercourse with you that he is of the same flesh and blood that he honours and respects in yourself. Do not budge a single hair's breadth from the truth; do not be guilty of any weakness he might be inclined to commit; be circumspect in everything you do; do not repulse his friendly advances, however hard it may prove, with severity or false pride; share his innocent pleasures; let him see that you sympathise with his troubles and sorrows, and truly you will get on better with these folk than with the outwardly brilliant companionship of Europe. Morality and virtue need not be brought from civilised Europe—Indians have a far more tender regard for them than we have."

Schomburgk spoke for his time; civilisation may have had its malign effect on the virtue of some Indians, but in general I think his words need very little modification today.

I ate my heaped plate of rice and tinned steak while the Indians sat down to partridge stew, into which they dipped the whitish fragments of a cassava flatbread. This bread, like all the cassava bread I was to eat, had the consistency of crisp asbestos, and was as savourless. It is without taste even to the Indians, who make it edible by dipping it into spiced and peppered sauces. It has a high starch content and such large quantities

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are eaten that the Indian's body is usually covered with svelte layers of fat which conceal the amazing development of his muscles. The culture of the Indians of the tropical forests of South America is a "cassava culture," just as that of Central America and Mexico is a "maize culture." The Mayas owed their civilisation to the discovery of maize, and I have often wondered what the history of the equatorial forest Indians would have been if they had discovered maize rather then the inferior cassava. The Maya low-land culture flowered in a terrain no more welcoming than the Guiana forests; with maize the Caribs, Warraus, and Arawaks might have stabilised and united, afforded the luxury of a cultural élite, built great stone cities, and carved fine idols and altars. Or was there an inborn genius in the Mayas which would have triumphed over the disability of cassava, a genius which did not exist in the distant cousins of Guiana?

In the last light of the evening I lay gently swinging in my hammock, while the rain fell a foot or two from me. I then saw the simple ingenuity of the *benab;* its floor was raised a few inches from the surrounding ground, and the manicole palm-leaf roof overhung like an eave, so that the water fell clear of the floor and drained away in a neat rivulet. I looked up at the sloping roof itself and admired the geometrical laying of the leaves, which formed a pattern of great natural beauty. Then I noticed that part of the hut was constructed with a different kind of wood, which prompted the first of my many questions to Rod and Cyril. They were patient; they told me the central uprights which supported each gable and were always made from the strong, slender trunk of the *kouta* tree, that *kakaralli* must be used for the horizontal side posts, and the cross beams at the gable ends must be made of the strongest wood of the forest, *krokai*, on which to tie the scale lines of the hammock.

I LIGHTED the lantern and watched Cyril, sitting by the dying fire, laboriously scratching letters with a stick on the hard earth. Slowly he scratched out the unformed letters of his own first name. It was all he could write, and always in the evening when he was pensive after food he would sit with his stick and make his mark. I asked him if he had ever been to a mission school, and he said he hadn't. "But me is Christian, sir," he said. It is always fascinating to know what Christianity means to primitive people who have been converted by its evangelists, and I asked Cyril about his early life and his conversion. He had been born and brought up, he said, in the village of Siniaparu, on the Barama River, and during his childhood he remembered seeing only a few white men, traders who had come to Siniaparu, given the children names (John Thomas, I gathered, was a very common name) and moved on. "When me still small," Cyril went on, "me go to Arakaka side and white man he give I name Cyril and talk Christ. Me first hear Christ there." The missionary had talked to him and other children for three days about Christ and the Christian God; then he had baptised them, and passed on up the river, leaving his seeds to flower. Cyril, however, had no conception of the meaning of Christianity, or indeed that Christ himself was anything but a white man who promised much. When I asked him what he felt about his religion I received the simple but effective reply: "Nothing." "But you *are* a Christian," I insisted. "Oh yeees, me is Christian," he said, with the long sighing sound that punctuates all Carib speech.

I must have been a pest to them that evening; while they longed, in Indian fashion, to discuss each tiny incident of the day in their low, agglutinative murmur, here was I, asking question after question and producing laughable sounds in imitation of the Carib words they taught me. They concealed all signs of irritation, however, and repeated words and verb conjugations endlessly until I could transliterate them with some accuracy. The most significant thing about the language was the absence of English neologisms; all "post-Conquest" words were of Spanish origin, which suggested that in the past the Spanish influence from the

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Orinoco colonies had spread south into this part of British Guiana. When, much later, I was with the Akawaio Indians—who are of Carib stock—I found Spanish neologisms existed but were much less frequent. For instance the Barama Caribs call a hat a *sumbederdu* (sombrero), while the Akawaios call it an *avoḳ*. But both call a gun an *araḳabusa,* from arquebus. Other words of Spanish origin among the Caribs are: *perro* = dog, *sapatos* = shoes, *sapata lava-wundich* = socks, *plata* = money, *aranḳa* = orange (Sp. *naranja*). I think I made one tiny contribution to etymology when I stumbled on the derivation of the word *manatee*. The *manatee* is that strange aquatic animal with a fish-like tail, which suckles its young. I was asking the Marques what their word for milk was, and when they replied *"paḳamanatil"* I asked what "breast" was. *"Manatil,"* they said.

At last, as the night sounds of the forest intensified, I stopped asking questions and lost myself for half an hour in the mad world of Dickens, while the Marques settled to their conversation—low, monotonous, full of sighs and yet punctuated with sudden starts of laughter as they recollected, presumably, some amusing incident of the day; the careful way I had walked along the tree-trunk bridges, or the time Cyril caught his foot in a root. I, my sight weakened by the feeble light, lay in my hammock, feeling so exalted that in spite of the day's exertions sleep would not come. I tried to imagine the scenes that were taking place at that moment in the civilisation I had left; and I remembered what I could of a passage in Rilke that had impressed me so much some years ago, and which seemed once again so appropriate:

"In order to write a single verse, one must see cities, and men and things; one must get to know animals and the flight of birds, and the gestures that the small flowers make when they open out in the morning. One must be able to return in thought to roads in unknown regions, to unexpected encounters, and to partings that had long been foreseen; to days of childhood that are still indistinct... and to mornings by the sea, to the sea itself, to oceans, to nights of travel that rushed along loftily and flew with all the stars."

Parents

PARENTS: a word at school:
Part of what children grow
Up against. Being slow
To stand back and let them spring
Up to heart's height and higher
Parent is equal fool
With teacher. Who conspire
To oppress wise children are
Forgotten in their turn;
And children when they learn
Who parents are and why
Theirs were so long mislaid
Smile to themselves and sigh
Long after long weeping.

Oliver Bernard

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS:—The death in August of B. V. Tomashevski, the eminent Russian literary critic and historian, has been reported. Born in 1890 he, together with V. Shklovski, J. Tynianov, and B. Eichenbaum, belonged to the so-called "formalist school." After formalism was destroyed in the U.S.S.R., Tomashevski devoted himself to editing Russian classics. He left an unfinished study of Pushkin, the first volume of which appeared in 1956.... Alberto Moravia's *Roman Tales* have been published in a Russian translation with an introduction by Ilya Ehrenburg. The reviewer in *Oktyabr* (No. 8, 1957) recognises "the pen of a master" but complains that "an immense world of heroism and action has remained outside the scope of the book".... Reviewing Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, recently translated into Polish, Jan Wyka, an ex-member of the International Brigade, writes: "The readers will be able to confront fabricated history with its treatment in an individual workshop. The credulity of some will be undermined and the sceptical search of some others satisfied." (*Tworczosc*, No. 7, 1957).... The *Manchester Guardian* reports that "during the recent Youth Festival in Moscow a student picked up the latest edition of a scientific dictionary and turned to his British companion: 'Two years ago,' he said, 'cybernetics was described in here as "a bourgeois pseudo-science". It is not in this edition at all. Next year it will be described as a Russian invention.'" Events have moved faster than his prediction. *Voprosy Filosofii* (No. 3, 1957), in an editorial article, asserts that "the birth of cybernetics opens up to humanity a perspective no less promising than the discovery of the methods of releasing atomic energy" and goes on to say: "Only the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and no other, has proved itself faithful to the natural science, and it was only this philosophy which correctly led the way to new achievements of natural science".... Antoni Slonimski, the chairman of the Polish Writers' Union, was among more than sixty writers who, during the recent International PEN Convention in Tokyo, signed a protest against the "persecution and imprisonment of our Hungarian colleagues".

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A member of the presidium of the Polish Writers' Union, J. Zulawski, complains in *Tworczosc* (No. 8, 1957) that "books and literary magazines sent from abroad do not reach as a rule their addresses in Poland, and are simply retained by the Post Office.... Such is the case, for instance, with the two best British literary monthlies—*London Magazine* and *Encounter*.... But why mention literary journals! Even *Vogue*, the colourful and innocent fashion magazine, is being withheld. I am not concerned in the least with the defence of *Vogue*, but if the reason for all this is to 'safeguard' young women in Poland against the 'temptation' of elegance, then we are slipping back into a dark abyss of folly".

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ILYA EHRENBURG has followed *The Thaw* with a thunderbolt. He has published an article in the Moscow monthly *Innostrannaya Literatura* which is in almost open defiance of the Party line. It is entitled "The Lessons of Stendhal" and leaves no doubt as to what Ehrenburg is referring when he quotes the French writer:

"What counts is not the personality of the tyrant, but the essence of tyranny. A tyrant may be intelligent or stupid, good or evil; whatever the case, he is both all-powerful and powerless, he is frightened by conspiracies, he is flattered, he is deceived; the prisons fill, the cowardly hypocrites whisper, and the silence becomes so complete that the heart almost stops.... At fault is the society which demands hypocrisy, punishes the truth, and stifles noble passions for a set of conventions."

According to Ehrenburg "Stendhal's experience dispels many illusions of the present which pass at times for incontrovertible truths...." In an aside he suggests that "if Stendhal were among us now, he would probably fail, as a dilettante, to be accepted into the Writers' Union."

For such undisguised rebellion, Ehrenburg was attacked by an unknown writer, Tamantsev, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. This did not prevent him from stressing, in an interview with a Rumanian author, Victor Vintu, the importance he attaches to the article:

"I have recently published an article called 'The Lessons of Stendhal'. Why that title? Because it seems to me that for us, for our art, the inheritance of the great writers has at present a many-sided significance. Writing on Stendhal, I am presenting Soviet writers with a series of contemporary problems which appear to me as being of special relevance at the present time." (*Contemporanul*, August 30, 1957.)

In another conversation with a young Polish writer, Ehrenburg "talked about Pasternak and Martynov. Martynov has not had for many years the possibility of appearing in print. But he did not give up poetry. He wrote for himself and for

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his friends. On his fiftieth birthday his readers organised for him an evening of poetry-reading. The auditorium was overflowing. It became obvious that Martynov's unpublished poems were familiar to a wide public. Similarly with Boris Pasternak. When now and again, he forgot a word, while reciting his poems, the audience prompted him." (*Nowa Kultura*, September 1, 1957.)

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THE changes in Polish journalism and publishing policies, over the past year, are not restricted to the question of political content. It would probably be no exaggeration to say that it has changed less in this respect than in some others. Before 1956, the reign of terror (in life) and of virtue (in the press) restricted the scope of all writing and reporting: not only were many political topics taboo, but also anything pertaining to sex, accidents, and crimes. Similarly, books not conforming to the criteria of Soviet neo-Victorian prudery were never published—"thrillers" of any kind were banned. No consideration was paid to "consumers' sovereignty" in this as in any other sphere. The state publishing monopoly could disregard the costs and send tons of printed (and unread) paper back to the paper-mills for pulp.

To-day, paper distribution is still in the hands of the State, but a stricter cost accounting has been introduced with some rather interesting consequences. Individual newspapers have started competing for the favour of readers, and publishing houses have begun to adjust their supply to the (anticipated) demand. To attract readers, newspapers now use devices well-known in the West: stories with a "human interest" angle and photographs of film stars in alluring postures. Brigitte Bardot in particular, in various degrees of attire, has been splashed all over Poland. One of the periodicals has even introduced a regular feature called: "Instead of Brigitte Bardot," displaying each week photographs of ladies in bathing-suits *mode* 1900.

Publishing houses also have begun to publish "thrillers" and literature generally in line with popular taste. Among Western imports, *Bonjour Tristesse* and *A Certain Smile* (in Polish translation) were both best-sellers. A young and talented writer, M. Hlasko, excels in using "realistic" forms of speech. This use of "bad language" is not only *"pour épater le prolétariat"* but also a reaction against the previous period when any such expressions were strictly prohibited in print. One consequence of the new "commercial" policy is that the average number of copies of newly-published books has dropped considerably. Only rarely now does a printing exceed 4,000 copies. The profitability of *Kitsch*, a problem not unknown in the West, has already moved Polish writers to loud lamentations.

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A VISITOR from Warsaw in Moscow:—"I saw a strange play by Pogodin, called *The Aristocrats*, in the Mayakovsky Theatre. It is based on a book published in 1933, *The White-Sea Canal*, a collection of autobiographical stories written by prisoners who were building the White-Sea Canal. The heroes of the play are the functionaries of *Cheka*, its theme is the process of creation of "new men" in a labour camp. Meyerhold, the Soviet director of genius, staged the play. It was first performed in 1937. A year later Meyerhold was arrested and, after two years, killed. In 1956 he was finally rehabilitated.... Good *Chekists* are again educating on the stage the new men. I would prefer to see on the stage of the Mayakovsky Theatre a new Soviet play on the tragedy of Meyerhold." (K. T. Toeplitz, *Nowa Kultura*, September 1, 1957.)

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JOHN STRACHEY'S latest book, *Contemporary Capitalism*, has become a particular target of criticism in the Soviet and satellite press. A special article has been devoted to it in the first number of the new Soviet economic magazine, *The World Economy and International Relations*, which says: "The sharpening of the crisis of British imperialism is bound to undermine the reformist position in the British working-class movement.... In this situation the Labour ideologists have to make certain corrections of their theoretical concepts.... Their aim is to strengthen reformist illusions.... One example of this is John Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism* ... [Trying to refute the Marxist theory of value] Strachey declares that he wants to rely on modern statistical methods of economic analysis. Such methods, according to him, demonstrate well enough that the sources of wealth are not only labour but also entrepreneurship and managerial skill. What is the meaning of this assertion if not a denial of capitalist exploitation and a justification of capitalist profit? ... The facts show that the gap between real wages and the value of labour has increased considerably and absolute impoverishment of the proletariat has become greater.... The book is entirely devoted to the cause of the defence of capitalism."

In contrast, a Polish review concedes that "it seems probable that Strachey is right and that the share of the working class in the national income is growing in the countries of developed capitalism" and concludes that "the author is an adherent of socialism and is not trying to justify or embellish capitalism." (*Polityka*, August 28, 1957.)

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LETTERS

ANGRY YOUNG MEN

... Both Mr. Tynan and Mr. Osborne ... are angry about education, about the dear old public schools, those hot-beds of homosexuality, those breeders of privilege—"the education that will assure (the middle classes) of the best places under the sun." I suppose it's useless to point out to Mr. Tynan that his statement that young people in jazz-clubs are "drawn from every class except the top one" is made to look pretty silly by the public-school men who are jazz-band leaders. Useless, too, I'm afraid, to ask Mr. Osborne how *traditional* privileges can be *bought*, or to say that George Orwell's comments on his use of the words Socialism and Toryism might seem positively bad-mannered. So instead I want to join in and make some splendid sweeping statements.

No young person believes in hat-raising: very few wear hats.

The only reason that Mr. Osborne is able to get on with his job as an artist is that wicked capitalist society has allowed him to make enough money out of his plays to be economically independent, and wouldn't we all like to be *that*. (If I'm wrong about this I'd like to know *how* Mr. Osborne has the opportunity he didn't have before.)

The difference between *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and *Look Back in Anger* is that the first seems like a true picture of what went on inside the house in Carlton, Victoria, during the lay-off, while the second seems like a false one of what went on in the Porters' one-room flat in the Midlands. I'm even more ignorant about cane-cutters than I am about sweet-shop owners, but I could believe in the situation of the one, while I couldn't in that of the other. I'm not saying that the characters in *Look Back in Anger* were incredible—they weren't: only that they were in such an unlikely and melodramatic situation that a lot of the play's point was lost because of it. I don't *care* whether Jimmy Porter is drawn exactly from life or not: I can't believe in him and his wife and his sweet-stall, that's all, while I *can* believe in the barmaids and the cane-cutters. Anyway, the sweat of the common man doesn't smell any different from the sweat of the aristocrat: everyone sweats. It's not sweat that interests me in either of the plays, it's the people who do the sweating.

So please let's have the plays and the films about what goes on inside people's houses, but make it convincing....

Julian Mitchell

Cirencester
Gloucestershire

I was intrigued by Mr. Osborne's obsession with the so-called "Class War" (October Encounter). His complex-ridden article in which he spends much of his time calling the class he adores a mass of "totem worshippers" has certainly turned me into an angry young man. Angry with Mr. Osborne. I was brought up and still live in a working-class society. My relations are so working class that they consider people who run public houses to be "Middle Class."

I would like to know how much contact Mr. Osborne has with the working class *now*? Or is he content to be the idol of an immature middle-class public? He talks of other people's "forced accents"; Mr. Osborne's accent would be regarded with even greater suspicion by a working man. He must remember that to keep in contact with the masses it is essential that there is no outward sign of being an intellectual. I refer him to Peter Wildeblood's excellent article "What Clothes the Wazir Wore...." The average Englishman of any class respects intelligence but he *admires* courage and integrity, hence "the idiot heroes" of "Reach for the Sky" and "The Battle of the River Plate."

If Mr. Osborne is really interested in social issues, which I doubt, it would be better that, instead of becoming a coffee bar discussion point, he became a realist and a public bar discussion point. There is no need for him to prostitute his undoubted talent, a little more contact with reality is all that is required; but, alas, I feel he is too far gone on the road to "middle-class security."

Dick Dobson

Winchester
Hants

Judging from press portraits, Mr. John Osborne must be a kindly young man well disposed towards the "damned human race." But I think, nay, I am convinced, that he is utterly misguided in ascribing

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some sort of superiority to republics over monarchies. For is it not in the republics that corruption flourishes? Is it not the republics which are standardised, regimented? Is it not the republics which maintain hated secret police systems, inquisitions, and other institutions characteristic of reigns of terror? If I had to choose between republics and monarchies I would not hesitate a single second in casting my vote for the latter. It certainly should be apparent to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear that with the exception of Switzerland (of which country I unfortunately have no first-hand information) it is the monarchies of Europe where there is still some freedom and some common decency left.

Mr. Osborne is right in saying that civilisation, by which I assume he refers to the much advertised Western species, has lost faith in itself, but it won't regain that faith by substituting republics for monarchies. That would merely be jumping from the frying pan into the fire. May God forbid adding that tragedy to the many others to which the republics of the world have led us.

A. R. Kock

Helsinki, Finland

Mr. Osborne is not, as Mr. Wildeblood recommends, "down in the Isle of Dogs, all ears." He is in genteelest Chelsea, all eyes for the popular dailies, using the political education they give him to make cheap sneers at Conservatives. (How many Socialist intellectuals since Priestley have cared a damn for the working classes anyway?)

When the Labour government gets in, it will be an uneasy day for Mr. Osborne. He will have nothing left to sneer at. But perhaps by then he will be living comfortably enough on the rewards of escapism, sentimentality, and first-rate drama.

G. L. Playfair

Pembroke College
Cambridge

For Osborne and Tynan I sigh,
Their Anger may fade bye and bye,
But their thinking is such
That I fear very much
They will remain immature till they die.

Michael King-Smith

London, S.W.7

As one of those non-intellectual types whom John Osborne did not expect to be in contact with when he wrote his article "And They Call It Cricket," might I add my comments to your correspondence pages?

I found the article curiously inconsistent—even for its avowed purpose of "making people feel".... Just how dead is the "royal symbol"? Not as dead as he thinks, certainly—you can't persuade a "mob" to rush forward in the Mall on the strength of a dead tradition; anyway, isn't this mob chiefly composed of those same lower-middle class people whom he goes on to describe with obvious affection: "Even if they did get drunk and fight, they were responding; they were not defeated."

"Responding," I suppose, must include indulging that deep subconscious loyalty to the Crown which is the despair of socialist intellectuals.

In any case, these same intellectuals don't seem to have anything much to offer as a replacement for the royal "circus"—even supposing that the latter ceased to exist as the apple of the public's eye. How do you interest the so-called "masses" in Mr. Osborne's "complex social concepts"? Answer: by turning your social concepts into a circus, complete with demagogic figures to replace royalty; hardly an attractive prospect.

I was puzzled at the reference to "idiot heroes" (as portrayed in "Reach for the Sky," etc.). Why "idiot" heroes? Is there anything basically idiotic in defending oneself against a savage and powerful enemy? This nation always turns its heroes into significant myths, and very significant they are; even Mr. Osborne might find himself the subject of a legend one day, if he ever finds a good cause to fight for. To me, the depressing thing about the "young angries" is their complete lack of patriotism; they will always attack the habits and institutions of their own country, leaving its many enemies severely alone. This, I think, is the real origin of the "loss of faith" bemoaned by Osborne —the honest proletarian mass, with their royal circuses and what-not, haven't lost their faith in our civilisation; only intellectuals with plenty of time for introspective thinking do that.

Mr. Osborne seems to be attempting to identify his own views with those of the "masses" and not succeeding.

P. W. Moir

Stanmore
Middlesex

"THE UNSERVILE STATE"

When I was a rather intellectual schoolboy and when socialism was still a thing intellectual schoolboys had the right to get excited about, I was present on a very distressing occasion. Our school debating society invited a distinguished alumnus, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, to debate socialism with a well-known Conservative M.P. On the very day of the debate, the latter gentleman was gripped by a real or diplomatic illness and, instead of coming, sent a "substitute." Cole, who spoke with his usual felicity and took his subject with proper seriousness, was thus followed on the platform by the "substitute," who turned out to be some minor propagandist from the then unreformed Tory headquarters who proceeded to do his by-election street-corner stuff before this very critical audience. The culminating point of his "disproof" of socialism was, if I remember rightly, a set of statistics which proved that State-owned railways somewhere in Australia had lost money. Cole was rightly dis-

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gusted; and we, the hosts, were profoundly ashamed.

I had forgotten this story until I opened the October number of ENCOUNTER and read Mr. Richard Wollheim's review of *The Unservile State*; and now it has come back to me. For here is a book which, for all the imperfections inherent in a collection of essays of this kind, does at least break away from the current platitudes of political cross-talk, and does show that there are some really first-rate minds among a relatively young generation of professional economists and others, who are prepared seriously to rethink the implications of a liberal society, and what this should mean in terms of current British politics. And what do we get from ENCOUNTER of all places?—a review that Mr. Morgan Phillips would hardly pass if produced as a hand-out from one of the lesser hacks at Transport House.

Mr. Wollheim gives himself away in the first paragraph, in his use of the dichotomy between "Right" and "Left" to describe differences between certain of the contributors to this symposium. What possible relevance has the "Right"-"Left" terminology to the problem of freedom? If Mr. Wollheim had created any confidence in his ability to follow sustained political argument one might recommend to his attention the chapter on "Liberty" in Bertrand de Jouvenel's *Sovereignty*. But certainly in the modern world one can no more take seriously a writer who suggests that politics is comprised by "Right" and "Left," than one would a cartographer who suggested that east and west were the only things that mattered, and north and south were just illusions.

On the particular points that Mr. Wollheim makes, he gives both himself and his prejudices away by taking statements completely out of their context, hoping they will be understood and condemned in a quite different context which his readers will supply for themselves. And it is not hard to do this with Peter Wiles who has, as ENCOUNTER readers know, a gift for paradox which demands some measure of alertness if it is not to be misled. But even Mr. Wollheim can hardly have been confused by Mr. Graham Hutton, whose worst enemies have never accused him of lack of clarity. If, instead of attempting to show that Liberals are hard-hearted grinders of the faces of the poor, Mr. Wollheim had said that what disturbed the authors of the book was the relevance of a structure of taxation and of social services to a situation in which the coming of a deliberately planned policy of full employment had completely altered the nature of the demands made upon economic policy, and also the composition of the groups who most required aid—would not all your readers have agreed that this was something that might legitimately exercise people's minds? Even the Labour Party is prepared to rethink the question of "pensions"; and even if there may be good reasons for keeping all existing social services equally available (or, as with rent control, not equally available) for all, this is hardly a self-evident economic or social proposition, let alone a self-evident moral one.

Why the building up of new forms of private property (and the wider distribution of existing property upon which Mr. Wiles lays emphasis) should not be "a direct achievement" of government policy, but can only be a "secondary product," is something which is presumably self-evident to Mr. Wollheim, but may well not prove so to anyone else.

It is perhaps in his comment on the proposal for tax-relief for school fees that Mr. Wollheim gives himself away most glaringly. The proposal is a controversial one—though if the state is saved money one cannot see why a proportion of it should not be freed to those who save it. But one can be open-minded on this. What is inexcusable is the statement that the issue to-day is not "private v. public, but class v. classless" in education. At bottom, it is a question of freedom in education, against the egalitarianism which says: (a) that differences between children either do not exist or are irrelevant to their education, and (b) that parents may spend their money on anything they like, from pushpin to poetry, but if they choose to spend it on their children's education they are to be regarded as moral pariahs compared with those upright citizens who bring in the profits to the distillers, and Vernons, and Littlewoods, or "go to the dogs." But I forgot: "going to the dogs" is precisely what Mr. Wollheim's political friends have in mind for us.

MAX BELOFF

All Soul's College
Oxford

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[*Mr. Wollheim replies*:

I find Mr. Beloff's letter rather hard to reply to: mostly because I can't distinguish between the arguments and the jokes. Take, for instance, the story with which it opens—is there supposed to be some formal similarity between what was wrong with the argument of the Conservative "substitute" and what is wrong with my argument, or is the whole thing just an elaborate way of saying that I'm no good? To take particular points:

1. I don't say or think that "Left" and "Right" are the only categories that can be applied to modern political doctrines. But I think that under certain conditions (conditions of political moderation, e.g., Great Britain to-day), they can be applied. Moreover, it seems to me that, since these are the categories in terms of which both the people and the parties ordinarily think and act, wherever they can be applied they should be applied.

2. If "taking statements completely out of their context" (that well-known gibe) doesn't mean quoting part of a book instead of the whole of it, it means, presumably, misquoting it. But if I am guilty of this, why doesn't Mr. Beloff let us have an example? Which of the propositions that I attribute to the symposiasts is not in fact held by them?

3. ...*If instead of attempting to show that Liberals are hard-hearted grinders of the faces of the poor*.... Of course I try to show no such thing. In the first place, I deal with only one section of the Liberal party: and secondly, even here, though I disagree with their views, I say that there are honest and disinterested reasons that might lead one to hold them.

4. I don't quite understand whether the achievement that Mr. Beloff claims for *The Unservile State* is that it deals with a certain problem (that of the social services) or—as seems more likely from what he says—that it *presupposes* a certain answer to it (in that full employment makes these less necessary). If the first, there is no originality here: if the second, no merit.

5. *Why the building up of new forms of private property (and the wider distribution of existing property upon which Mr. Wiles lays emphasis) should not be "a direct achievement" of government policy, but can only be "a secondary product," is something which is presumably self-evident to Mr. Wollheim, but may well not prove so to anyone else*. My point is simple. The State can produce conditions under which the accumulation of private property is possible, or easy, or even attractive. But it cannot accumulate property for its citizens in the direct way in which it can take it from them. I made the point only (a) because those to whom creation of new property seems such a desirable end *might* find it less desirable if the means to this end were made explicit (and of course they might not), and (b) because it seems to be somehow symptomatic of Liberal policy nowadays that it promises to produce conditions which can at best be only consequential upon conditions which it can directly produce.

By "By gives himself away most glaringly," Mr. Beloff means, I suppose, "expresses himself clearly." I wish that the same could be said for him. Whether, for instance, I subscribe to the egalitarianism that so distresses him, I really don't know because I can't understand it: it sounds to me most like a parody of traditional liberal theory. Incidentally, what rebate does Mr. Beloff propose for those sturdy individualists who refuse to sponge and batten on our public galleries, museums, and libraries?

A distinguished Liberal-Conservative thinker of our day once suggested that the rôle of a political party in a modern democracy is that of "selling" a policy to the electorate, and the freedom of the electorate is that of buying whichever it chooses. If this account is correct—and I personally believe it is—it follows that any policy a party advances should spring from, or relate to, the hopes, wants, needs, interests, and fears of existing people, as these are actually experienced. If a policy does not do this, however honourable or ingenious it may be, it is ultimately frivolous. In this sense *The Unservile State* seems to me a frivolous book. On re-reading what I wrote about it, I now see that some of the frivolity must have leaked out of the book and seeped into my review. It is this frivolity that made Mr. Beloff so very angry. I am sorry about this: if only because when Mr. Beloff is very angry, he is very hard to reply to.]

THE DEMISE OF COCKNEY

Mr. Wildeblood's claim (October issue) that Cockney, as spoken in 1957, is not a debased language, cannot be upheld. Just as some landscapes, as, for instance, America suburbia, are unpaintable, so certain types of urban speech, with Cockney prominent amongst them, have become degraded beyond all chance of literary use.

The primary reason for the debasement of Cockney is, of course, that of class. Unlike the Irish and American Southern speech which Mr. Wildeblood mentions, and unlike English North Country and Scottish speech, Cockney has degenerated into a purely lower-class language and as such has lost validity in an increasingly classless society. It is no accident that, to find a tough, living, literary gangster speech, an English writer like Raymond Chandler had to go to California. The English variety, radio, and television entertainers who to-day employ full-blooded Cockney only as a comic turn, probably understand the response of their mass audience rather better than does Mr. Wilde**blood.**

Being a lower-class speech only—and this is one of Cockney's fatal defects—it cannot be used to communicate beyond its narrow frontiers. Attempts to carry it across the class gap have always remained artificial, whether in the case of Eliza Doolittle or Mr. Wildeblood's esoteric play upon minor thieves' argot. Moreover, having been degraded in social status to a lower-class medium, Cockney has become correspondingly impoverished and inflexible. Admittedly it still lends itself to picturesque epithet. Few things are more satisfactory to listen to than the pungent Cockney repartee of a London bus conductor: yet can one imagine even

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simple abstract ideas expressed adequately in Cockney? It is significant that even children from rigid Cockney homes are to-day bi-lingual. The point here is not, as Mr. Wildeblood observes, that such children shift their accent and syntax kaleidoscopically back from standard English on leaving the school gates. Far more important is the fact that at the grammar school or technical school the brightest among them drop Cockney as fast as they can, in fact flee from it. This is the reason why Cockney is to-day being steadily weakened. Mr. Wildeblood's contention that it is assimilating American mass-entertainment speech is surely nonsense: it is being affected and replaced by it, as a visit to the dance hall soon shows.

Another factor in the debasement of Cockney is, I fear, that it has been socially derided for too long and somehow this unpleasant contempt clings; while staunch Cockneys, who in turn treat standard English as "sissy," only limit their own powers of expression by this. Lastly, it is safe to say that Cockney is debased because its whine is æsthetically so ugly—it can be claimed as one of its sins that its dipthongs gave rise to the drawl of its equally obnoxious counterpart, Mayfair English, now also on the way out.

The very survival of Cockney may be deceptive. The other day, watching a set of boys on a council estate play impromptu football on an asphalt pitch, I was struck by their changed bearing. A decade ago they would have knocked around in shirt-sleeves and fluttering waistcoats. To-day they wore well-cut jeans or stove-pipe trousers, with high-necked sweaters in bold colours, Italian style, and careful and expressive hair-dos. In appearance, they had lost the old class uncouthness; yet, when they shouted, the cacophony of wild Cockney vowels and dropped consonants became a secret language. But no sooner had a brisk games-instructor appeared than the same youths dropped as if magically into standard English, non-U variety, to which the touch of Cockney accent gave genuine and pleasant local colour.

Cockney's demise is sure. Eliza Doolittle, to-day, would not be a Cockney but a young lady from subtopia, speaking standardised English in the allegedly wrong or non-U manner. And in cultural terms the central task of to-day is surely to infuse this great mass of non-U standard English, the real English majority tongue of to-day, with some of the infectious literary quality evidently possessed by the idiom of Marlon Brando and the characters of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. It is an interesting task which, for example, Kingsley Amis in *That Uncertain Feeling* has already tackled with some success. Cockney is dead: long live non-U English.

T. R. Fyvel

London, N.W.1

L'AFFAIRE DJILAS

In my article on "Djilas and the Yugoslav Dilemma" for your October issue, I mentioned that as a prisoner in Mitrovica, Djilas is not permitted to obtain books on contemporary history. This information, received from a reliable source during my recent visit to Belgrade, was the occasion for an unfavourable comparison between the conditions of Djilas' imprisonment by the present Yugoslav régime and by the pre-war monarchy.

It has since been reported, on equally good authority, that Djilas in prison is working on a biography of the 19th-century Montenegrin poet, ruler, and prelate, Njegos, and that he has no difficulty in obtaining books for this purpose or for the study of Western languages. I therefore hasten to clear the record of the present-day Yugoslav treatment of political prisoners to that extent.

Unfortunately, the political news from Yugoslavia gives no occasion for similar corrections of my critical remarks.

Richard Lowenthal

London, N.W.8

Your three contributors on "L'Affaire Djilas" (Encounter, October), writing from different angles, arrive at a conclusion of tremendous importance. What emerges is that economic options cannot be kept isolated from administrative questions: it is no longer useful to take a stand in favour of an economic system until the administrative content has been defined. We have previously been intoxicated by the "panoramic" approach to economic problems—the magnificent, world-embracing analysis of writers like Marx, Sombart, and Weber. In the works of these economists we have accustomed

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ourselves to "broad social movements" representing "underlying economic realities" moving inexorably to "inevitable goals." Nor should we underestimate these contributions. It will never again be possible to write a book on history or economics which does not owe something to Marx (even if it is only a keen distaste).

Twenty years ago to state a belief in the "social ownership of the means of production" was to make a useful contribution to a debate on economics. Now, we are entitled to very little recognition of our prescience unless we go on to define the methods by which this objective will be secured. The latest Soviet text-book on economics (1955) is perhaps unaware of how little it has said when it observes: "In State enterprises, which are the property of the whole people, the share of the social product going to the worker for his personal consumption is paid out in the form of wages. The State lays down in advance fixed wage-scales."

The questions that are relevant to the present stage of the debate on Socialism go far beyond this. We want to know in exact administrative terms who the State is; what is the composition of the management of the State enterprise; by what *exact* representative machinery do the workers participate both in the organisation of the industry and the distribution of the product of their labour. If a political speaker in Hyde Park or on a platform tries to evade these questions, shout him down.

The Djilas affair goes right to the heart of all the furious debate that is raging in this country over the future of nationalisation. The economic arguments have been stated to the point of tedium; we know now about the economics of large-scale production and of the integration (rather than the cut-throat competition) of road and rail transport. We know that coal-owners are as dead as the dinosaur. We know that electricity can better be generated in a few big plants (publicly owned) than lots of little ones (privately owned and Emmett-like).

What we now want to know is how, in the words of Kardelj, this kind of socialist enterprise will further the development of a new type of relations between human beings. Nor are we particularly helped by the kind of platitude that stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from the "social ownership of the means of production" one, i.e., the "Socialism stands for human values" statement that is uttered by at least six hundred parliamentary candidates at five-yearly intervals. As far as the delicate web of human relationships goes, Jane Austen will always have much more to say than any politician one cares to name. The task of the economist-politician (and all who support his approach) is to make human values articulate in administrative structure: to ensure that citizens gain an increasing share in the organisation of their daily lives—politically and industrially—by systems of self-government based on trade unions, works councils, consumer committees, and through more traditional methods like Parliament. All this may sound rather dull: but it is the only answer to the horrors that Djilas has depicted.

ALAN THOMPSON

Department of Political Economy
University of Edinburgh

"A HISTORY OF PUNCH"

AS AN anthropologist, Mr. Gorer is naturally disappointed that my *History of Punch* does not devote much space to his special interests; similar objections could be raised by experts in other fields. There is a mass of work still to be done and I hope somebody will study *Punch* "as part of the social history of the period," as I hope somebody will study it as evidence for the history of fashion; but these will be contributions to other subjects, not to the understanding of *Punch*. The magazine has long suffered from this assumption that its only interest is as raw material for work on something else. I wanted to focus on what had actually appeared in its pages.

I had no room for a general discussion of humour and I had to omit far too many contributors. As the book was unabashedly personal, I did not think it necessary to follow each judgment with some such phrase as "Of course, this is only my opinion" or "We cannot all think alike, can we?" though this is apparently how Mr. Gorer thinks adults should be addressed. I did not "tell the enquiring reader what he ought to think" but I told him what I thought, hoping to stimulate him into agreeing or disagreeing, but only after looking at *Punch* afresh. I was trying to modify the stock picture of *Punch* which has been formed by taking the worst features of all periods and compounding them into a single image. The bad work in the paper has masked the good and the good is far more accomplished and varied than many people realise.

Other reviewers have noticed a schoolmasterly tone. It must be a recent development. Nobody ever thought me schoolmasterly while I was teaching. Of course nobody would attribute Mr. Gorer's disappointment to personal pique, especially as my criticism of his contributions was that they were too like the old *Punch* and not enough like himself. One's fans may irritate but never pique.

R. G. G. PRICE

Haywards Heath
Sussex

"THE TOYNBEE MILLENNIUM"

IN THE "Letters" section of the August and September ENCOUNTER the verdict appears to be unanimously against Trevor-Roper's attack on Toynbee. Yet so far the criticisms are limited to undocumented statements that Trevor-Roper is wrong or went too far—and above all that his manners were deplorable (*especially* for a Regius Professor of History Designate at Oxford).

Without venturing into this last intra-mural domain, is it really so undesirable to show strong feeling and dot i's in a public polemic on occasion? And do not your readers' complaints about Trevor-Roper's manners obscure his central point without dealing with it at all? That Toynbee is a man of exceptional talent, industriousness, and importance in contemporary thinking is denied by few, certainly not by Trevor-Roper. In his angry but *not* undocumented polemic, Trevor-Roper is calling

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attention to something else which ought to be at least of equal importance: that Toynbee's approach is neither that of a historian nor that of a dedicated supporter of the one advanced and free civilization that does in fact exist in the world to-day.

Since Toynbee, alongside with Albert Schweitzer, is one of the two great Tory prophets of our time, why not concentrate on this and not on relative manners, reputation, or profundity?

GEORGE FISCHER

Professor of History
Brandeis University
Boston, Mass.

I HAVE followed with great interest the correspondence in your paper consequent upon the publication of Mr. Trevor-Roper's striking article. As Mr. Stillman, of New York, now brings my name in, I trust you will allow me to say a few words.

Mr. Stillman recalls how a Leyden bookseller pointed me out to him as "the man who demolished Toynbee." His comment is that he, Stillman, had not known that Toynbee was demolished. But did I ever make that claim myself? When the last essay I devoted to *A Study of History* (after the appearance of the concluding four volumes) was reprinted in my volume of essays *Debates with Historians*, I added to it the following footnote:

"Since writing this article I saw an advertisement page in the *N.Y. Times Book Review*: 'Have you seen what they are saying about Arnold Toynbee?' I quote some of the headings of the seventeen extracts from reviews (among which I spotted only one written by a learned historian): 'Amazing and monumental . . . An immortal masterpiece . . . The greatest work of our time . . . A literary and intellectual phenomenon . . . Probably the greatest historical work ever written . . . A landmark, perhaps even a turning point.' This chorus of praise is a chastening reminder of the very restricted influence exercised by professional criticism. The effect it had on me was nevertheless a heartening one. I have sometimes felt the uncomfortable thought stirring: 'Is it still worthwhile?' Apparently it *is* still worthwhile. For we must never abdicate before misdirected popular enthusiasm."

This should be enough to show that I preserved my sense of proportion. It ought to make clear also that I and other critics of the great work (I include expressly Mr. Trevor-Roper) have been activated by other motives than those of "envy," and that our "passion," "rudeness," or "fury" might be more justly described as impatience and indignation resulting from concern for high values of our civilisation. Mr. Stillman can see nothing here but Western-civilisation chauvinism. I have indeed spoken of "this Western civilisation of which I am a son and which I love." Before I admit that this is chauvinism, I should have to be convinced that the universalism for which we are advised to desert it is a more fruitful source of great mental and social achievements. It may be a beautiful aspiration, but until it has proved itself to be something more than that, let us remember the injunction of the evangelist: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

One great achievement of Western civilisation is respect for clear thinking, for logical and truthful arguing. *A Study of History* (for all its remarkable qualities, which I have never denied) offends against this continually and glaringly. And its offence is the more heinous, its potential influence the more dangerous, because its eloquent author assures his readers all the time that he is conducting a severely scientific, empirical investigation. It is this pretence, this make-believe, against which I have from the first directed my criticism. In 1946, and again in 1949, I pointed out that the "facts" on which Toynbee professed to base his system were not facts, that they were subjective combinations or interpretations of facts, that his foundations were therefore shaky and insecure, and the system a fantasy.

In the essay I mentioned before, which was written in 1954, I observed that Toynbee, while denouncing and ridiculing professional historians as a class, had never come to grips with the very precise and fundamental expositions in which I (and many others) had shown his work to consist of "fallacious arguments and spurious demonstrations." After the essay had been published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, New York, I heard that Toynbee had sent in a reply, and a friend who saw it before I did myself wrote to me: "this comment covers one page, in which he simply agrees with you." Indeed, when the next number of the *Journal* reached me, I found that the "comment" did not deserve to be called a reply. It was dis-

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tressingly vague. The tone was unexceptionable ("my old friend Professor Geyl"), but my criticisms were consistently evaded. This is a way of conducting a debate which is not in accordance with the best traditions of Western civilisation; it gives one no favourable impression of the new civilisation which Toynbee and his admirers want to substitute for it.

In the essay itself I had already remarked that prophets do not argue, and I continued: "It is too late in the day" (after he had missed the opportunity of his chapter on historiography) "to issue an express challenge to Toynbee to prove that, for instance, his reading of 19th-century Italian history, which according to my demonstration did not warrant the conclusions he drew from it, was right after all; or to do the same for his reading of North American history, which I argued was hopelessly wrong, so that his laws and large theories fell to the ground." He had not done so then, he did not do so in the one page comment. He will never do so.

Nor does Mr. Stillman make an attempt to refute criticisms in any other way than by heavy sarcasm or innuendo. He mentions only one concrete point about Afrikaans, as a cultural language. It is a very minor point, and the transparent intention is to create the impression that these petty-minded critics of the great work can only make a great to-do about *minutiæ*. This is another example of the familiar method of evasion. I am only too sure that an express challenge to prove me wrong, even on that question, but especially on the large matters of Italian or American history, or on whatever subjects I have touched upon in the course of my critical handling of *A Study of History*, will evoke as little response from the disciple as it has from the master.

PIETER GEYL

Department of History
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Cambridge, Mass.

"THE MONTESI AFFAIR"

ONE MIGHT quarrel at length with Wayland Young's sentimental distortion of Italian life and character (September issue) but this, at least, is a matter of opinion. It is a matter of fact that *maleducato* means, not "ill-educated," but badly brought up or bad-mannered, while calling a person *tu* on early acquaintance, far from being the custom, is considered in most circles *molto maleducato*.

BRIAN GLANVILLE

London, S.W.3

[*Mr. Young comments:*
Certainly *maleducato* means bad-mannered, but what is interesting is that this is the word which *does* mean bad-mannered. A boorish, loud, or inconsiderate person is held by the Italian language to lack not breeding, not feeling, but education. As to *tu* and *lei*; I said it was used at once between people of the same age and standing. I've no doubt you could find "circles" where it was hardly used at all. There is a censorious, stuffy, and narrow, lower middle class in Italy, as there is everywhere, but its values are less widely spread through the whole community than they are here. That was one of the points I was making.]

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BOOKS

Drinkers of Infinity

THE Babylonian's universe was an oyster with water underneath and more water overhead supported by the vaulted firmament. It was of moderate dimensions and safely closed in on all sides like a babe in the womb. From the 6th pre-Christian century onward, during the heroic age of Greek science, the oyster was gradually prised open and the earth set adrift, a huge ball floating unsupported in the air. The Pythagoreans set the ball spinning; Aristarchus of Samos set it revolving round the sun; the atomists and Epicureans dissolved the world's boundaries in the infinite.

This exhilarating development lasted for about three centuries; when the energies of the heroic age were spent, the reaction set in. Plato shut the lid of the universe again, and Aristotle transformed it into an air-tight system of nine concentric crystal spheres, enclosing each other like the skins of an onion. The planets moved on smaller spheres, like ball-bearings between the layers of skin, and the outermost skin, that of the *primum mobile*, was the boundary of the world.

The Aristotelian model was improved on by Ptolemy, but the principle remained the same. For nearly two millennia, the universe went into the deep freeze. Then, in the 16th century, the thaw set in. It is at this point that Professor A. Koyré's book on the cosmologies of the Renaissance picks up the thread.*

The scientific and philosophic revolution, which makes the year 1600 appear as a kind of watershed in the history of European civilisation, can be approached from various angles. Professor Koyré's approach is defined in his introduction:

The revolution . . . can be described roughly as bringing forth the destruction of the Cosmos, that is, the disappearance . . . of the conception of the world as a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole (a whole in which the hierarchy of value determined the hierarchy and structure of being rising from the dark, heavy, and imperfect earth to the higher and higher perfection of the stars and heavenly spheres), and its replacement by an indefinite and even infinite universe which is bound together by the identity of its fundamental components and laws, and in which all these components are placed on the same level of being. This, in turn, implies the discarding by scientific thought of all considerations based upon value-concepts, such as perfection, harmony, meaning, and aim, and finally the utter devalorisation of being, the divorce of the world of value and the world of facts.

Within its self-imposed limits the book is a model of scholarliness without pedantry, of clarity without over-simplification. It starts with that lonely, late mediæval forerunner of the New Philosophy, Nicholas of Cusa, and ends with Newton. Bishop Nicholas (1401–1464) was the first to kick against the lid of the mediæval universe; he asserted that the world had no boundaries, and consequently neither periphery nor centre. It was not infinite, merely "interminate," that is, unbounded. He was no mathematician, and one must beware of reading a too literal interpretation into such intuitive guesses; but in so far as intuition is concerned, Cusa's self-contained universe that is neither closed-in nor infinite, has an unmistakable kinship with the finite, relativistic universe which, through the curvature of space, returns into itself. But more important: by denying that the world has a centre or a periphery, Cusa denied its hierarchic structure, denied the lowly position which the earth occupied in mediæval cosmology, the confinement of the evils of "change and decay" to the sublunary sphere—as opposed to the pure and immutable higher heavens:

* *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe.* By ALEXANDRE KOYRE. *The John Hopkins Press,* Baltimore, 1957. *Oxford University Press,* London. 40s.

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"The earth is a noble star," Cusa proclaims triumphantly, *"...it is not possible for human knowledge to determine whether the region of the earth is in a degree of greater perfection or baseness in relation to the regions of the other stars, of the sun, of the moon, and the rest."*

To put it in a pointed manner: a bounded universe, with its concentric series of shells, implies a rigid, hierarchic natural and social order where every (living or inanimate) item in the cosmic inventory has quite literally a "place" assigned to it in the hierarchy of space; whereas in an infinite or merely unbounded universe, without centre and circumference, no "place" takes precedence before another—homogeneous space implies a quasi-democratic cosmos. But it also implies, on the debit side, the absence of any obvious, or "natural," scale of values. Thus the new cosmology was bound to alter the whole pattern of social and moral ideas; and it had, of course, an even more immediate impact on theology and philosophy. Professor Koyré concentrates his narrative on the two last-mentioned developments, and on the key figures who influenced them.

The timidest among these is Canon Copernicus. Compared to Bishop Nicholas he is a downright reactionary, for he reverts to a universe with a definite centre (though instead of the earth this is now occupied by the sun), and a definite boundary, the immobile sphere of the fixed stars. An enthusiastic English disciple, Thomas Digges, soon replaced the closed Copernican universe by an open one; but the reconquered territories he assigned to God, not to physics. Giordano Bruno, the philosophical *enfant terrible* of the 16th century, was the first to assert flatly that the universe was infinite and consisted of an infinite number of inhabited worlds similar to ours: *"Thus is the excellence of God magnified and the greatness of His Kingdom made manifest; he is glorified not in one but in countless suns; not in a single earth, but in a thousand, I say, in an infinity of worlds."* Bruno was an obvious case of being "drunk with infinity" (as Moses Mendelsohn said of Spinoza); he ended on the stake, though not for his cosmological ideas.

The three giants of the scientific revolution who laid the foundations of the Newtonian synthesis—Galileo, Kepler, and Descartes—were characteristically reticent concerning infinity. Kepler rejected it on technical grounds which were quite sound according to the observational data available to him; Galileo shilly-shallied, with an eye on the Inquisition; Descartes, on a higher turn of the spiral, reverted to the position of Cusa: *"We must never dispute about the infinite, but only hold those things to which we*

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do not find any limit, such as the extension of the world . . . to be undefined."

Descartes' difficulty about the infinite stemmed from the perennial "horror of the void"; he could neither face an infinite universe filled with matter, nor space without matter. It was again left to a scientific dilettante, the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, to build up a philosophy of infinite space *an sich*—of space as an attribute, not of substance, but of God. Though Newton does not mention More, there is sufficient internal evidence to show that the Newtonian concept of absolute space and time was derived from the latter.

The book ends with an excellent analysis of the famous Newton-Leibnitz controversy about the place and function of God in a mechanised world.

Professor Koyré's previous *magnum opus, "Études Galiléennes,"* was aimed at scholars; his new work is accessible to the educated layman. One of its lessons, as I see it, is, that the dilettantes who made no concrete contribution to science—Bruno, Digges, More, or Coates—developed much sounder and more self-consistent views on the philosophical problems involved in the scientific revolution than the founding fathers of modern physics and astronomy—Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, and Newton himself—who floundered through a mire of contradictions and yet delivered the works. It seems that the saying about good cooks working in dirty kitchens equally applies in the august realms of science.

Arthur Koestler

THE ART OF A MORALIST

A Father and His Fate. By I. Compton-Burnett. *Gollancz.* 13s. 6d.

Probably any reader of Encounter could give a short list of living writers who intimately interest and attract him, while admitting that he is not yet ready to make claims for them which are even roughly proportionate to his interest. The test for admission to the list is: would I buy and read any book by this writer, as soon as it is published, knowing that I cannot fail to be deeply interested by it, no matter how much it is despised by critics whom I respect and whom I cannot plausibly answer? To be honest about such a list is not the same as to be deliberately uncritical. It is more like acknowledging greatly increased uncertainty as soon as one descends below the very few works of contemporary literature which impose themselves as authoritative, large in consequence, and as not to be ignored by anyone.

Whenever there is an insistence on keeping critical standards aloft, as there is now, two quite different reasons are apt to be confused. The first is that one ought to separate any really authoritative work, which it is a definite loss *not* to have read, from the run of intelligent, original, and honestly imaginative writing, which is unlikely to affect the future course of literature or the habits of thought and feeling of later generations. This seems obvious and indisputable. The second, and much more disputable, proposition is that one ought to dismiss from serious consideration anything that lies on the apparent margin of literature, and which now seems eccentric or fragmentary or uncertain, when judged by the standards set by great writers already recognised. This is disputable, just because these standards have to be derived from the recent past. No one can know whether his unexpected enjoyment of something, which by these standards seems eccentric and trivial, is not a sign of a general change of interest rather than a personal addiction. Perhaps some contemporary novels, which now pale into insignificance when compared with *The Rainbow* (or even *Soldier's Pay*), may later be seen to have some lasting interest, because of a social or moral change, which we have not yet named and cannot identify.

My own list of writers immediately bought and read, strongly interesting, not easily explained, certainly includes, among novelists, Miss Compton-Burnett, alongside M. Montherlant, Mr. Isherwood, Mr. Evelyn Waugh, and, later and therefore less confidently, Mr. William Golding and Mr. Salinger. This is plainly not a novel-addict's list, because they are all novelists who have a bright surface, not much Dickensian variety, and they all present a rather partial or lop-sided view of society. The least various of them is Miss Compton-Burnett. She has indeed invented a kind of variant of the *roman fleuve*, in successive novels immersing her readers in the same unmoving pool. This last book is wilder and contains more violent scenes and more improbable events than any of the others. The members of the family batter each other mercilessly in conversation, and the construction of the plot is recklessly relaxed. In the solemn terms of criticism, it is a late work, with all inessentials eliminated and every device of style given free play. It is superbly amusing, lighter than many of the others, certainly lighter than those which include small children, who always add gravity and a greater sadness to her stories. There is no pure comedy now being written in England, either drama or fiction, which has

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any virtue comparable with the grim intellectual gaiety of this book. Why does Miss Compton-Burnett rise above mannerism and eccentricity? Why is she likely to be read when most of her contemporaries are forgotten?

First, Miss Compton-Burnett is a moralist, in a sense of the word that allows that there have been many great French moralists and very few English. The pleasure of the moralist is to probe through the decent conventions to the natural laws of conduct and feeling in which we have all really believed and to find apt words for them: if possible, a few words, the maxim that puts the smothered general truth shortly and only once. This is the pleasure of discussion, of intellectual surprise, of the contrast of what is ordinarily said with what is really believed, of the ambiguity of a situation condensed in plain words, of having every side expressed, nothing smothered. The art of the moralist must be difficult in English, because there is no tradition of it, outside a healthy intellectual horseplay, as in Shaw: more difficult still, if the story is to be carried forward to a climax for which the reader waits, as in a detective story, to know who loses and who wins, and—not usually the same—who is guilty and who is innocent.

Second, there is the scarcely varying subject, which is given the appearance of coming from some strong and distant experience: love and the struggle for status within a family, crossing the barriers of sex and every other conventional barrier. This terrifying institution, the family, half natural and half social, is made a microcosm of the world, as Freud said that it was, and it always holds together in the end. The meek often inherit, with their usual quiet ruthlessness: one of them does in *A Father and His Fate*. The best men are usually the least manly, the best women usually the least womanly, and the best characters of all are the utterly irresponsible, the enemies of status and respectability, who have withdrawn from the race for possession; having a "relaxed will," they can afford to be interested in the truth, and, with a quiet egoism, they are lucidly curious about themselves and uncensorious about others. The worst have the egoism of advertised self-sacrifice, are active in organising the lives of others, and are tragically self-deceived. Usually the climax is a classical recognition scene: the kinships, like the virtues, are not what they seemed. In *A Father and His Fate* the recognition scene is just, and only just, averted. The stories seem to me very much like Life, with mood and time span left out, if unpermitted love, the emotions of kinship, and the desire for possession are large and continuing parts of life. The fact that it is all supposed to have happened fifty years ago is no disadvantage, any more than it has been a disadvantage in many of the greater novelists of the past. Imagination usually draws on childhood or early youth, and as for the living present, we can leave it to our journalists.

Lastly, there is the style and method of these novels in dialogue. It is a curious fact that obvious originality, in the simple sense of newness, of being unlike anyone else at a first impression, is more highly valued in the visual arts, than in literature. Miss Compton-Burnett's style and method do not derive from any identifiable influence, and her dialogue does not look like anyone else's, even superficially. Perhaps the nearest superficial resemblance is to *The Awkward Age* and *What Maisie Knew*. But James's virtuosity in dialogue served an entirely different purpose. It was intended to be dramatically effective, to make a fine scene; *The Awkward Age* is often like a less coarse version of Pinero. In these two stories the situations and the comedy of manners were the main interest, and this is certainly not true of *A Father and His Fate*. Here the interest is in the moral argument, the wit and penetration of the points of view expressed, the comedy of disguise and pretence, and of the respectable half-truth punctured. It is difficult to believe that comic writing of this excellence will soon be forgotten or left unread. I think it will be left, high and dry, long after the tide of sociological prose has receded.

Stuart Hampshire

THE ESSENCE OF CAPITALISM

Polity and Economy. An Introduction to the Principles of Adam Smith. By Joseph Cropsey. *Martinus Nijhoff*, The Hague. Distributed by *B. T. Batsford, Ltd.* 19s.

One of the great difficulties in acquiring a sense of the past is that it means taking seriously ideas which one simply cannot take seriously. Nor does this only affect the very distant past, when a society could be thrown into discord over the precise definition of the substance—which was not a substance—shared by the three members of the Trinity. This happened so long ago that it now has the unproblematic quality of a fairy tale. But even much of the 19th century is today almost incomprehensible. In order to understand that century, one must read Malthus and Spencer, which is barely possible; and understand them as the reasonable thinkers their contemporaries took them to be, which is close to impossible. The economic journals will every so often publish an article

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showing that, for instance, if Malthus thought a high price for necessities was advantageous to the working class, he had good reasons for doing so.* We are easily persuaded: to believe such a patent absurdity one *must* have good reasons. But we still find it beyond the limits of our imagination to suppose how anyone was ever moved to think up such reasons in the first place.

Nor does the ironic Marxist *exultet* on capitalism ("O happy sin, to deserve so great a redeemer!") help us much. It inclines us to regard it with a supercilious contempt, as something inevitable but fleeting. That men actually believed in capitalism as a positive ideal; that "the system" was for them something noble and exemplary; that, in advocating and supporting it, they regarded themselves as humanity's benefactors; that they thought it made men not only richer but spiritually freer—all this the Marxist must dismiss as a convenient illusion, an "ideology." Feeling, as he does, that he understands the capitalist better than the capitalist ever understood himself, the Marxist (and most of us in the 1950's are Marxists in this sense) is debarred from ever trying to understand him *as* he understood himself. Which is to say, he is incapable of understanding him at all, in the only way a real person—as against a theory, an idea, a caricature—can ever be said to be understood.

It is the major virtue of Mr. Joseph Cropsey's book that he is aware of the problem of "making sense" of capitalism, though it is in his case for a very particular reason. Mr. Cropsey is a disciple of Professor Leo Strauss, now at the University of Chicago, who may be summarily (and very loosely) identified as a kind of Wittgenstein in American political philosophy—a tantalisingly provocative thinker whose influence is slowly but majestically gaining in momentum among younger American scholars. To describe the precise nature of this influence would require a previous analysis of Professor Strauss' own philosophy, and that is not something for this place or this time; he is—as the comparison with Wittgenstein is meant to imply—not the most transparent of writers. Briefly, however, one can say that Professor Strauss is a classicist who feels that modern thought has gone off the Aristotelian rails, to its own demerit and eventual disaster. Mr. Cropsey's book, then, looks upon Adam Smith from a classical perspective: with a sense of wonder at what this man hath begot, and a discernible *frisson* at the presumptuous novelty of it all. He approaches Adam Smith, so

* There is, in fact, an extremely interesting article on this very subject by William D. Grampp, in the *American Economic Review* for December, 1956.

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to speak, from behind. And that is about as good a way as any to catch a philosopher.

Mr. Cropsey sees Smith as falling into, and in some ways capping, the distinctively modern tradition that begins with Machiavelli and flowers with Spinoza and Hobbes. It is a tradition whose metaphysics are materialistic, where nature is merely the matter rather than the form or end of things. Human nature, therefore, it defines in terms of what men are rather than what man is; and the human good, formerly thought to be rational in its essence, is assimilated to the natural-mechanical "good" and thus reduced to the self-preservation of one's existence. This doctrine has egalitarian implications, since the urge to self-preservation is equally shared by all men; whereas classical philosophy was hierarchical, its premise being that some men were more rational than others, and therefore superior. According to these modern thinkers, men are ineluctably governed by their passions (fear, pride, lust, sympathy, etc.), and nature causes men to seek the good by making the good attractive to their passions: out of the welter of individual passional activity comes—as a resolution of all the single factors—civil society, the state, the laws, and all the distinctive institutions of civilisation. According to Adam Smith, "the great secret of education is to direct vanity to proper objects," and what is true of education also holds for all the other socialising disciplines. Whereas, for Justinian's Institutes, justice was "the firm and perpetual *will* to do the right," for Spinoza-Hobbes-Smith justice is divorced from the personal will and ascribed to a state of affairs whose main feature is contractual reciprocity—i.e., an equilibrium of competing selfishnesses. Where Smith, however, differs from his predecessors is his emphasis on the urge to material self-betterment as a fundamental human motive, and on the importance of commerce and industry as civilising arts. This enabled him to liberalise the Hobbesian system and to envision a society whose mildness of manners required no powerful spiritual or temporal authority to enforce peace and order.

This last point is crucial for Adam Smith, as Mr. Cropsey demonstrates in detail. Though we tend to believe that Adam Smith favoured liberty so that capitalism could properly work (and thereby prepare the way for the post-capitalist epoch—i.e., us), it is equally possible and considerably more plausible to think, with Mr. Cropsey, that the terms of this proposition can be reversed, and that:

"Smith advocated capitalism because it makes freedom possible.... He thought... that where the people are impelled from within, viz., by their interested passions, to do the things needful for social existence, they will not have to be impelled from without, or bound to their duty by powerful civil or ecclesiastical masters."

This interpretation, at the very least, helps explain the presence in the *Wealth of Nations* and the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* of all those savagely critical remarks on the capitalist system which otherwise seem so out of place. After Smith has got through asserting how the labouring poor are debased by the division of labour, and how traders and monopolists are incorrigible cheats, one is hard put to it to understand why he ever bothered to advocate the establishment of commercial society. In the light of Mr. Cropsey's exegesis, we can now see that he accepted these evils in return for a greater good, and this good was freedom from the kinds of restraints which a different social order, one based on absolute and objective values, would have made inevitable.

I have done less than justice to Mr. Cropsey's book, which is closely and subtly reasoned, and immensely suggestive in its implications. After reading it, one appreciates how it was that for more than a century the Western World was dominated by an industrial ruling class which, in good conscience under the ægis of human equality, accepted the right of the *seigneur* while ridding itself of all seigneurial obligations and responsibilities. (As M. Bertrand de Jouvenel has pointed out, the early legislation on workmen's compensation had to resort to all sorts of cunning legal fictions to affix a responsibility that was obvious to the naked eye.) One also appreciates the extent to which, even to-day, a debased version of the spirit of capitalism prevails long after the "welfare state" has superseded "commercial society." Among all groups of the population, whatever their economic status or political disposition, it is taken as a datum of human existence that men are only a more talented species of animal; that his actions are predetermined by his passions; that political wisdom consists in the reconciliation of conflicting appetites; that men's needs are identical with their wants; and that to suggest that human happiness is something man must seek within himself, rather than being a thing to be produced by the operation of other things, is to be a victim of retrograde illusions. This was the situation apprehensively noted by Montesquieu, when he wrote at the very beginning of the capitalist era:

"The Greek political writers, who lived under free government, did not recognise any force which could uphold them but that of virtue. Those of to-day speak only of manufacturers, commerce, finance, wealth, and even of luxury."

Irving Kristol

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LANDMARKS AND TURBULENCES

Robert Graves. Poems selected by himself. *Penguin Books.* 3s. 6d.

Like a Bulwark. By MARIANNE MOORE. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

Tenants of the House. By DANNIE ABSE. *Hutchinson.* 12s. 6d.

The Sense of Movement. By THOM GUNN. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

The Hawk in the Rain. By TED HUGHES. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

THIS is not the place to talk at length of such long-established poets as Robert Graves and Marianne Moore. But the appearance of a very full selection of Graves's poems in the Penguins and of a new volume by Marianne Moore should not pass without notice; and these two remarkably clear-cut and stable individualities can also serve as landmarks by which to orientate the newcomers. Heaven knows we need landmarks in a territory as vague and chaotic as the poetry of this mid-century. Mr. Graves and Miss Moore have this in common—that each with a strong and peculiar poetic personality has been working in an almost unchanged manner, unaffected by fashions and movements, for over forty years. Graves is the more traditional. We can see everywhere in his poetry what a few years ago was regarded as almost disgraceful, and what now seems eminently reassuring, recollections of some of the enduring modes of English verse. All his poems have a mastery of rich, pointed, unaffected phrasing; and of extremely finished, unexperimental form. Many might be 19th-century lyrics or ballads; many more recall the 17th-century lyric; and in others there is an 18th-century wit and social assurance. Yet none of them look like poems by anybody but Robert Graves. This is probably because they are mostly about Robert Graves: he is pre-eminently a poet who presents his own personality—stubborn, wayward, adroit, amorous, genial, and sardonic. (His poetic personality, that is to say; whether it is the same as his historic self is a different, and an indifferent, matter.) When he uses wit like that of the metaphysicals he uses it as they generally do, not to say anything about metaphysics, but to investigate a personal situation. Some of these situations have a strong emotional content, most of them are quite minor ones; and it has therefore sometimes been said that Graves is a very good minor poet. With this one need hardly quarrel—except that to say minor poet suggests disobliging comparisons with major poets, and there is not the slightest impulse to make Graves the object of such comparisons. He is what he is; the poetry

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never pretends to be more than it is; and for some of the love-poems and some of those on historical themes the word minor seems quite out of place. He has one poem on being called a bear, which I suppose he has been called: as well as being rather big, bears are notoriously likeable animals.

The blurb to Marianne Moore's latest volume concludes by saying "Miss Moore's admirers will not be disappointed." I confess that I can only be counted among these with considerable reservations. Her dry intelligence and her odd individuality of perception are undoubted. But dry intelligence and odd individuality of perception are useful adjuncts to a poetic procedure; when they become the poetic procedure itself there is a sense of something lacking—and that the something is almost everything, as of a meal composed of seasonings without nourishment. She has been praised for the precise formal patterns of her verse; but more often than not these patterns turn out to be merely visual ones. A skein of discourse is chopped up quite arbitrarily into numbered syllabic lengths; if the words don't fit they are divided in the middle; and many of the deliberately lightened rhymes are rhymes only to the eye or to a second thought; their auditory effect is almost nil. Having made these grudging subtractions one must concede the skill and elegance with which she plays her game of moving intricately among small objects, weaving quotations from newspapers and guide-books into a kind of verse, and mixing them with odd scraps of rather finicky erudition. But it can be suspected that Miss Moore's very high reputation as a poet belongs to a period when it was the acme of success to produce something manifestly intelligent and difficult to bring off, in a manner which scrupulously avoided both any ingenuous human response and any suggestion of the traditional sonorities of English verse. It is possible that this period is passing.

DELIBERATE novelty of form in Miss Moore's manner, or in any other, is now the exception. Perhaps after a long run of novelties it would be difficult to find any more. It is more general nowadays to find oneself puzzled not by formal unfamiliarities but by an uncertain fossicking among contradictory effects. In Dannie Abse we have a poet whose genuine originality is almost entirely a matter of image and idea, not of form, nor of language, nor of feeling. He calls some of his poems metaphysical ironies, some social ironies. But I do not find them very ironical or metaphysical. Characteristically they are based on some elementary opposition—between the individual and a group, between the social persona and the intrinsic self, or between two halves of a divided personality. And these are expressed in images that are living because the experience seems to have been arrived at inevitably by means of them.

Twice upon a time
there was a man who had two faces
two faces but one profile:
not Jekyll and Hyde, not good or bad,
And if one were cut, the other would bleed—
two faces as different as hot and cold.

But the language itself is rarely taut enough to bring the opposition sharply into focus: what emerges is a sense of rather blurred dichotomy. There is uncertainty too about how the rhythms are meant to be used. A poem begins with something that seems deliberately foreign to normal verse rhythm:

Now you take away my thoughts one by one
and extinguish me. See, it has begun
and in my darkness all Your lights blaze out.
I move my mouth but Your new words I shout.

But after a few stanzas it has slipped back into what is rhythmically a perfectly conventional quatrain. Was the normal verse-rhythm really the basis of the poem all the time, and the prosaic unrhythm of the opening lines an irrelevance? Or was the colloquial prosaic run of the opening really meant to set the norm, and the regular beat of the later stanza arrived at by a kind of automatism—the iambic automatism that is both the staple food and the besetting habit-forming drug of English verse? I suspect that Mr. Abse is primarily and most happily a lyric poet of a traditional kind, and most at home with the traditional lyric measures.

These are the kind of puzzles that poetry to-day, obviously sincere in its emotional purport and often uncertain of its technical procedure, seems to face us with. Of course a genuine free-verse rhythm, that has been felt and conceived as such, is another matter. It has never been common in English, even in the heyday of *vers-libre*—1910 to 1930, say. Still less commonly has it been successful; and successful or not, it is now pretty rare.

The younger writers, of whom Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes are both examples to be treated with respect, nearly all write in fairly strict symmetrical forms, or in some easily definable variant of them; and this is as true of America as of England. Both of these young poets are Englishmen, but both have experienced the American influence. Mr. Gunn at present lives there; and Mr. Hughes plans to live there, and has published mostly in American magazines. In Thom Gunn's case the attraction seems to be the idea of America itself, the European idea of America as something ebullient and unbounded. (To the native sons the fences and the

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constraints are more apparent.) We can see this both in the spirit and in many of the details of these poems: the rejection of nature, the romanticising of the megalopolitan scene, the view of motor-cycling as something lonely, rebellious, and vaguely delinquent (in England it is just a cheap means of transport), the half-identification with the teen-ager's idol Elvis Presley, whose pose is seen as "maybe posture for combat." Perhaps there is a little delayed-action Hemingway here; the danger is of becoming a grown-up, cultivated version of the adolescent rebel-without-a-cause. But there are also distinct resemblances to Robert Graves. There is the same precision of form, without desire for technical experiment; a similar rather intricate use of imagery, recalling the 17th century and suggesting to the unwary reader a philosophic intention that may or may not be there. In Graves, however, it rarely pretends to be there, and if the reader is deceived he deceives himself. Thom Gunn's poetry constantly aspires to philosophic general statements. The philosophic-epigrammatic is extremely hard to bring off in a present where hardly anyone has a philosophy of life worth mentioning and the philosophers themselves have virtually abandoned the attempt. Poetry to-day is probably on more appropriate ground when it deals with the thing seen, the individual story; and Mr. Gunn is certainly stronger in his individual notations. But his title *The Sense of Movement* is also the leitmotif of the book. It appears explicitly in the closing lines of the first poem—

Reaching no absolute in which to rest,
One is always nearer by not keeping still.

One isn't, one might bluntly reply; this is an attempt to make a philosophy of life out of the absence of one; better to leave the absence unadorned. What is most striking in these poems is less their content than the energy and accuracy of phrasing, quite without eccentricity or strain. If, as we have been told, the formation of a valid natural modern poetic idiom was the lesson poets had to learn in the earlier part of this century, Mr. Gunn has learnt it.

A mansion, string of cottages, a farm,
Before you reach the last black-timbered barn
And set your foot upon the path that leads
Up to the hill where Follies and façades
—Typical products of intelligence
That lacks brute purpose—split, disintegrate,
And, falling with their own rich weight,
Litter the slopes, a record of expense.

As some of his verses almost confess, he does not yet quite know what to do with this admirable equipment. Unlike Mr. Graves, who seems to have had an assured poetic personality from the start, Mr. Gunn is in process of making one. Perhaps it has something to do with the time of day, and the absence of "The Georgian silver and the rest/From my male ancestry" that provides Mr. Graves with such a rich plum-cakey background: perhaps it is that Mr. Gunn is going to be a different kind of poet. At the moment he is much occupied with toughness:

I think of all the toughs of history
And thank heaven they lived, continually.

But toughness to no purpose, like movement in no direction, is almost without meaning. The best poems in this volume, and the best are very high accomplishments indeed, are those on objective, outward themes—"Autumn Chapter," "At the Back of the North Wind," "The Inherited Estate"—where the burden of forming an attitude by an act of the will is laid aside.

THE most obvious thing to say about Ted Hughes is that he makes the impression of being a poet by nature and instinct. Not that this excludes at his present stage, several echoes, chiefly of Hopkins and Dylan Thomas. But the point is that a rich, even a turbulent life of feeling and observation seems to transfer itself immediately to his words, without diminution or impairment. Plenty of people have the feeling, a few have the words. The lucky ones, poetically speaking, are the very few in whom the passage between the two is open and untrammelled:

This water droplet, charity of the air,
Out of the watched blue immensity—
(Where, where are the angels?) out of the
draught in the door,
The Tuscarora, the cloud, the cup of tea,
The sweating victor and the decaying dead
bird—
This droplet has travelled far and studied
hard.

He does not mainly write about himself, or explore his personality, or search for images to give poetical embodiment to emotions left lying about the house. Typically, he responds with great energy and intelligence, to outer objects—other personalities ("Secretary," "Famous Poet"), situations ("Parlour Piece," "Fallgrief's Girl Friends"), natural things—the macaw, the jaguar, the drop of water. There is some turbulence and violence of imagery, and too many approaches to the sexy, gusty manner of bad Dylan Thomas; the first impression is one of great verbal vitality, not always under control;

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but the second impression is of pure poetic intelligence. The phrase poetic intelligence really does mean something; it means not the kind of intelligence that condenses a few clever critical observations into verse, but the kind that can penetrate and transform a fragment of experience, without thinking at all about making a pronouncement, and at the same time say something memorable about the world, almost as it were by accident. "Fallgrief's Girl-Friends" and "The Man Seeking Experience Enquires his Way of a Drop of Water" are, I believe, profound poems. They are very unlike the current philosophic-epigrammatic mode with its anxiety to make a point—a two-line point after the statutory ration of descriptive imagery. What these poems have to "say" runs all through them; partly because they are written dramatically or objectively, and the imaginative effort needed to compass an outer object keeps up a high tension throughout the poem, does not leave it all to be screwed up by a neat twist at the end.

I do not always understand the formal organisation. Generally the rhythms are those of compressed, energetic speech, with long sentences running through many lines, even stanzas, and occasional approaches, not very close or very frequent, to a standard verse line. Yet most of the poems are written in stanzas, pointed by rhyme or half-rhyme. Some are of perfectly clear structure, but in some the obeisance towards rhyme and metrical form is so slight that one hardly knows whether it is being made or not. In these cases the stanza becomes little more than a typographical device; and perhaps some of the poems would be better in either a franker free-verse form, or one whose formality was more clearly marked. It is as though a desire and a capacity for lyrical and musical expression are deliberately troubled and kept at bay: the queer dilemma of much contemporary verse that is afraid to slip into the old tunes. In the poems where Mr. Hughes admits untroubled lyrical effects, the music is both beautiful and his own:

O lady, when the tipped cup of the moon
blessed you
You became soft fire with a cloud's grace;
The difficult stars swam for eyes in your face;
You stood, and your shadow was my place:
You turned, your shadow turned to ice
O my lady.

It may be only an alien viewpoint that makes me find such poems more finally satisfying than the ones where there is more tumbling violence of imagery and movement. There is certainly a very considerable achievement in both.

Graham Hough

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NEW NOVELS

Not by Bread Alone. By VLADIMIR DUDINTSEV. Translated by Dr. EDITH BONE. *Hutchinson.* 18s.

Those Without Shadows. By FRANCOISE SAGAN. *John Murray.* 9s. 6d.

The Language of Love. By CHRISTINE BROOKE-ROSE. *Secker and Warburg.* 15s.

The Sword of Pleasure. By PETER GREEN. *John Murray.* 16s.

EVERYONE must by now have heard of Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone*. It was first published in serial form in the Soviet periodical *Novy Mir* soon after Khrushchev's attack on Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in February, 1956, but it had obviously been written before that time. Its appearance caused an immediate sensation: meetings arranged by the Soviet Writers' Union for public discussion of the book were thronged by eager Russian readers, and headlines in the foreign press told of Dudintsev's Startling Indictment of Soviet Bureaucracy, his Frank Exposure of Stalinist Misgovernment, and so forth. After the *coup* in Hungary the Soviet press became more hostile to the book, but nevertheless in May of this year the State Publishing House in Moscow produced a single-volume edition of thirty thousand copies; and although there has been talk of Dudintsev being pressed to make a public avowal of his "errors," the statement he has made, and which is printed as an epilogue to the English edition of his book, cannot be read as, in any sense, a recantation.

Though written in part in Communist Newspeak, this statement is one which will command some sympathy, at any rate from literary men. Dudintsev complains that his novel has not been received as a novel, but has been seized upon by political journalists, by "experts on Russia" in the foreign press, and treated as propaganda. He says that these journalists, by taking excerpts from his book and printing them apart from the context, have given the impression that it is an attack on the Soviet way of life, whereas his true intentions were quite otherwise; he sees himself as a wholly patriotic writer. One may think: of course Dudintsev says this; he is in danger; what else could he say? But after one has read the book one sees there is more than that behind Dudintsev's protest. He *has* to some extent been misrepresented. He is not really a polemical writer at all. His book is not an "indictment" of anything or anybody.

It is a simple book, naïve, and sometimes rather boring, but very human in a Victorian sort of way. Other Soviet novels give one the feeling that thirty or forty years of totalitarian government must have produced a different race of beings from that which exists in the outside world; Dudintsev's characters are all, agreeably or disagreeably, familiar; one greets them with a sense of Platonic recognition. Assuredly Dudintsev has much to say about the workings of Russian bureaucracy, but the things he sees in that bureaucracy are not so very unlike the things which are seen in our own bureaucracy by the few English novelists who know anything about it—for example, by C. P. Snow.

Dudintsev can reasonably claim to be a patriotic writer. And yet one can understand that his book should be disliked in Russia. For it is a profoundly un-Marxist novel. It is not even a Naturalist or a psychological-Realist novel; it is a Romantic novel in the heroic, individualist, bourgeois tradition. The story begins in a remote industrial Russian town; the protagonists are Lopatkin, an inventor, wayward, dreamy, a little neurotic; Drozdov, the director of a State factory, a priggish, dwarfish, bumptious jack-in-office; and Drozdov's beautiful wife, Nadia. The two men are summoned to Moscow at the same time, Drozdov to take charge of an industrial research unit; Lopatkin to develop a machine he has invented. Drozdov despises Lopatkin, and his new job enables Drozdov, with others like him, to have Lopatkin's plans rejected. Lopatkin then throws in his lot with another thwarted inventor, an elderly professor, and the two men live together in an attic, earning enough as casual labourers to buy their bread, while they develop their inventions alone. They are saved from the direst straits by Drozdov's wife, Nadia, who falls in love with Lopatkin, and brings them supplies. Then Lopatkin is arrested on a charge of giving industrial secrets to a foreign power, and is imprisoned. One of his judges, however, has doubts about his guilt; so eventually Lopatkin is released, his invention is accepted, and he is reunited with Nadia, who has in the meantime divorced Drozdov. A blue-sky ending? It is, but for the fact that the same bureaucrats are left as firmly entrenched in their positions as they were at the beginning. There is no hint that they should be, or could be, dislodged.

Dudintsev's novel is the story of a lonely hero in a hostile world; but bureaucracy is part of that hostile world, and no more removable than the hostile world is ever thought to be removable in any romantic novel of the 19th century.

FRANCOISE SAGAN's third book is not as good as her second. This is largely because she has tried to pack a full novel into a book of thirty-odd thousand words. Both *Bonjour Tristesse* and *A Certain Smile* (a marvellous book) were *récits*, with a narrator and three or four other characters; *Those Without Shadows*

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is told in the third person and has a cast of more than sixteen principals. Even though she is an admirably economical writer, Miss Sagan has not been able to realise a scheme so large on a scale so small. Economy perforce gives way from time to time to racy, snappy writing. For example, Miss Sagan tries to conjure up the whole agony of provincial life with the one word: "Poitiers." But this is to ape such dramatists as Noël Coward, who pass as wits by doing this trick with names like "Budleigh Salterton" or "Tunbridge Wells." Again Miss Sagan has sometimes to make a single sentence do as the description of a character, as with this line: *"Alain had worked in a publishing house for twenty years; he was badly paid, a cultured man, and very attached to his wife."* On a first reading this looks (at any rate in French it looks) quite a clever epitome, but a second look shows it to be terse without being concentrated; it tells more than it need tell and less than it should. What it does have, and what the whole book has, is pace.

The book has other merits too; for although it is as a whole a disappointment, it is still unmistakably the work of a born writer. There are passages in it which are almost miraculously good, and one at least of the several stories which run through the book is extremely well done: this is the story of an affair between Bernard, a novelist approaching fifty, and Josée, a rich young girl who has another, rougher lover. Such relationships are, of course, Miss Sagan's speciality; and one cannot help wishing that she had stuck to it. She does not repeat herself; the things she does best she does better every time.

Miss Sagan's novels have the reputation of being amoral. This seems to me absurd. It is true that she writes about people committing adultery and fornication, but she makes this well-worn subject interesting only because she writes as a moralist. Her people do not mate like birds; they have to drink a lot and also—this is a particular Sagan observation—to be numbed by fatigue before they embrace. *Those Without Shadows* opens with Bernard's ringing up Josée from an all-night café; he has to wait until four o'clock to do so, until "he is tired enough to do the thing mechanically." What is true of making a telephone call is all the more true of making love. Hence the importance in Miss Sagan's novels of whisky and night-clubs and long drives in motor-cars: they are the specific against guilt, but the guilt is there, and it is as important in her books as it is in those of Mauriac.

IN A recent interview Miss Sagan said: *"Je trouve que les hommes ont beaucoup plus*

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d'ennuis que les femmes. D'abord, ils ont à s'occuper des femmes...." She was talking, of course, about France. Miss Christine Brooke-Rose's novel, her first, is about England, an England where it is the women who *ont à s'occuper des hommes*. Her heroine, a plump, sexy intellectual named Julia, does none too well for herself in literary London. Her fiancé, who is exceedingly religious, deserts her when he finds his church would not let him marry her. Her publisher is a pederast. A lecturer from London University, at whom she makes most vigorous passes, responds but fitfully. Julia's more enterprising friend, Georgina, finds herself a Negro, who gives her a camel. Julia herself almost settles for a B.B.C. actor, but turns back in time; and at the end of the story she decides to become a Roman Catholic.

It is a lively book, continuously entertaining and often very funny indeed. But the world Miss Brooke-Rose mocks is one which has been mocked too often. Her book puts one in mind quite as much of other books as of life itself. One thinks especially of *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* and of *The Towers of Trebizond*, the latter not only because there is a camel here as there was in Miss Macaulay's book, but also because both writers give one the curious feeling that one is not reading a genuine satire at all, but some enigmatic religious tract.

I HAVE left to the last the novel which is by far the best. There is not much to be said about Peter Green's *The Sword of Pleasure* except that it is the story of the life of Sulla, written as by him, and that one believes all the time that it was written by him. Mr. Green was the outstanding classicist of his generation at Cambridge, and he has deployed his formidable scholarship most skilfully; but it is the literary qualities, the style, insight, and vision which make his book so good. As a rule I detest historical novels; I did not much like Mr. Green's first, which was about Alcibiades; but this one is a triumph.

Maurice Cranston

HE STROVE WITH NONE?

Walter Savage Landor: A Biography. By R. H. SUPER. *John Calder*. 42s.

MUCH sympathy has been lavished on the romantic born out of his time—Blake in the toils of Crabb Robinson's "common-sense," Chatterton in his garret. But the classic can be born out of his time too, and his predicament is likelier to provoke grins than sympathy. He is a stray uncle at a children's ball. Superficially at least, Landor is of this company: it is at any rate the character of him that those of his writings which are commonly remembered offer the world. While Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Wordsworth were writing the works of Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Wordsworth, Landor was inditing in coolly classic style an *Imaginary Conversation* between Menander and Epicurus (whom at least we have heard of) or between Cavaliere Puntomichino and Mr. Denis Eusebius Talcranagh (of whom we have not), or composing those brief marmoreal verses, fitter for the chisel than the pen, upon the ephemerality of Rose Aylmer or upon the fact that (in his own view) he had striven with none.

But the appearance *is* only superficial. If Landor looks to us to-day to be cold, correct, and sculptural, that is no more than the impression that he intended to present. His own age knew better: and Professor Super's excellent, self-effacing, and definitive biography gives us the picture of a very different man—a lively despot with a hidalgo's touchiness of pride, tempestuous, exaggerated, absurdly optimistic, royally generous. His contemporaries knew him first as the author of *Gebir*, a wildly romantic and incoherent poem, classic in setting certainly (so is *Hyperion*) but in little else. It won him the devoted friendship of Southey and the distant admiration of Wordsworth. The *Imaginary Conversations* (certainly the form in which he "found himself") did not burst upon the world until he was fifty. If Landor's protagonists in the *Conversations* tended to be "classical," in the sense of belonging to the Greek and Roman worlds, their author's predilection for writing about any other age rather than his own was no less "romantic"—except again (and it is right that those dull and deceiving little categories of *classic* and *romantic* should tend to crumble at the impact of complicated reality) that a little deeper delving into the *Conversations*, with Professor Super for Vergil-guide, reveals the extent to which Landor used his apparently detached and abstracted form for highly implicated commentary upon contemporary manners and affairs, his own imbroglios with all and sundry not least of all.

Professor Super's attention is, however, directed primarily towards Landor's character rather than his works; and a highly fascinating and attractive character it is. Lady Blessington hits off much, if not all:

His avoidance of general society, though courted to enter it; his dignified reserve, when brought in contact with those he disapproves; and his fearless courage in following the dictates of a lofty mind, had somehow or other given the

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erroneous impression that his manners were, if not somewhat abrupt, at least singular. This is not the case.... [He] is grave and respectful, without his ever losing sight of what is due to himself, when most assiduously practising the urbanity due to others.

Leigh Hunt presents another side.

[He is] like a stormy mountain pine, that should produce lilies ... a man of vehement nature, with great delicacy of imagination ... a temperament, perhaps, rather than a mind, poetical.

The truth is that Landor had an exquisite sense of the dignified relations that should ideally exist between fellow prisoners in the human cage, but not the balance to realise that not all might share it. His whole life was a tragic comedy, presenting the spectacle of a royal lion uselessly wasting its strength in charging vulgar but agile monkeys. His dignity was eminent to such as (like Lady Blessington) possessed their own. To those who, of coarser fibre, lost "sight of what was due to himself" he became a monster of noble ill-temper. The extended list of misdemeanours which led to his temporary banishment from Tuscany included such items as pouring boiling water upon a chambermaid and attempting to kick a carpenter in the vitals. He only too well deserved the charming warning from Francis Hare that it was

by all the strictest laws of social intercourse enough for one gentleman to cane one scoundrel once in one life.

It is not the least merit of Professor Super that, by his patient and sensitive piecing together of the factual fragments of this contradictory and enormously long life, he enables one not merely to understand but to sympathise with this fundamentally tragic figure who hid his personal violence under a literary mask of monumental calm. It will also lead readers back to one of our most admirable stylists whether in his more polished public writings or in the casual throw-away grace of his letters—from which I pick this pleasing, and pleasingly expressed, sentiment to conclude:

More people are good because they are happy, than happy because they are good. This is not, however, the highest kind of goodness, but it wears passably well, and always looks sleek.

Hilary Corke

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

HERBERT LUTHY, Swiss historian-journalist who lives in Paris, is a frequent contributor to ENCOUNTER. His book, *The State of France*, was published by Secker and Warburg last year. He has just completed a major work on the origins of French capitalism, the first volume of which will be published shortly in Paris.

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH is the author of a volume of poems, a pamphlet on Robert Graves published by the British Council, and a forthcoming study of Laura Riding. He is married and works as a school teacher in Kent.

ARTHUR KOESTLER, as readers of his autobiography may recall, began his academic career as a physical scientist and journalistic career as a scientific writer. His interest in science has survived intact the turmoil of the past two decades and more. He has, for the past several years, been working on a book—now nearly completed—which traces the development of the modern scientific outlook.

LINDSAY ANDERSON, born 1923, Bangalore, South India. Scots parents. Classical scholar Wadham College, Oxford. Has written a good deal of film criticism for *Sight and Sound*, *The Times*, *Observer*, and *New Statesman and Nation*. Founder editor of the film review *Sequence* (1947–51). Has published one book, *Making a Film*, 1952. Simultaneously has pursued a career as film maker. First films for Richard Sutcliffe, Ltd., Conveyor Manufacturers of Horbury, Yorkshire (*Meet the Pioneers*, *Idlers that Work*, *Three Installations*). Worked on several experimental productions, including James Broughton's *The Pleasure Garden* (as producer), and Lorenza Mazzeti's *Together* (editor); both these films prized at Cannes, 1954 and 1956; own films include *Wakefield Express* (1953); *Trunk Conveyor* (1954); *Thursday's Children* (in collaboration with Guy Brenton: American Academy Award for best documentary short, 1955); *Foot and Mouth* (for Ministry of Agriculture); *Henry* (for N.S.P.C.C.). Directed some of Robin Hood television films, 1956. Involved in *Free Cinema* movement at the National Film Theatre, 1956–7: own contributions *O Dreamland*, and *Every Day Except Christmas*, film about Covent Garden Market, 1957. This last film won the Grand Prix for shorts and documentaries at Venice this year.

MICHAEL SWAN, who is thirty-four, writes of himself as follows: "Since he was a small boy at Christ's Hospital he has wanted to combine serious travelling with being a writer. Probably because he is a little hyperborean by temperament he took the first opportunity he could get to know the Mediterranean world, and later travelled in Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America. He enjoys primitive life, but has now had his fill of it. Most of the work he has published, including a novel and a book of essays, reflects his travels in some way. He is now preparing a book on Magna Græcia, which will be largely historical. He lives in London, the only place he would like to live in, is unmarried. "The Falls of Towakaima" is a shortened chapter from *The Marches of El Dorado*, which comes from Jonathan Cape's this year."

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